

Chapter 1 Based off of Harry's madness

Rage

Harry stood, listening to the argument between Arthur and Lucius. He stood there, wondering a single question: Why me?

(Why?) Harry thought his mind a rain cloud of sorrows. (Why? What have I done, except the best for them? I defeated Voldemort as a child- due to my mother, true, but I still defeated him- and I stopped him from getting the Sorcerer's Stone. I defeated the memory of Tom Riddle left in the diary and his pet basilisk and I saved Ginny as well. In my third year, I saw Voldemort's servant Pettigrew escape and freed my godfather- although those are things I can't and won't tell anyone- and last year, I came out of the Triwizard Tournament with Cedric Diggory's body in my arms. I saw Voldemort rise, The-overdramatic-dark-lord or He-who's-name-most-be-hyphenated. And is this my reward? My thanks for giving my all, for living in fear almost every day since my eleventh birthday? To be left in the dark of Azkaban by friends and hounded by my enemies?)

Tears almost sprang to his eyes- and then they were pushed back by a flood tide of sheer anger, a wave of fury, pure rage at all who had crossed him. More hatred than Harry had ever felt rushed to the front of his mind- he barely heard Fudge say "This way, Lucius"- and in it, a single thought came out.

(Make them pay. Make them feel your hatred, make them beg for forgiveness and give none to those that you deem. Let them feel your rage, your anger, your fury.)

Mr. Weasley, taking one look at Harry's haggard and drawn face, decided to stay quiet. The history of Wizarding might have changed had he spoken, but he said nothing.

Harry, left to his own thoughts, brewed them into a stew that was black and thick and viscous. (I will make them pay,) he thought, letting darkness nestle in his mind like an owl coming to roost. (I will strike them down, one by one or all at once. They will learn to fear me. I am not a child I will decide my own fate and the fate others. I will decide the fate of this world, if I wish to, and all who live in it and

they will pay for what they have done. I will not fall for I will make my own fate and the fate of many others.)

As he thought this, they stepped into the "elevator" that led upwards through the Ministry of Magic. As they stepped out, heading back, he looked at the fountain. The wizard, who looked so handsome from afar, looked like a fool up close. The woman had the blank, vapid smile that often appears on the faces of women who have realized that their bodies are far more valuable than their minds in this world. The Centaur looked at disgust at the two, the house elf beaten and cowering, and the goblin in greed. Harry stopped for a second, considering throwing a coin in, then decided not to. After all, he would need the money, for his war.

After returning to the Order of the Phoenix's headquarters and being greeted by everyone (including a very shaken Hermione), he announced that he was drained and wanted to sleep for a while. He was allowed to go, and he heard Mr. Weasley speaking to Sirius as he left.

"Settle down! Listen, Sirius, Lucius was at the Ministry-"

Harry heard Sirius' interrupting "What?" before closing the door of the bedroom he shared with Ron. Sitting on one of the beds, he began thinking. He had to know now if he had it in him- if he had the will to strike down his foes or even those that would turn on him. He thought of them all, both friends and allies, each time asking himself, "Can I kill them?". And near each time, the darkness rolled forward and enveloped him, and the answer was "Yes." "Can I manipulate them?" The darkness in him would answer "yes" in gleeful, maniacal, psychotic laughter

Harry looked at his hands. They would soon be the hands of a killer.

The thought caused a grin to appear on his face. His face was overshadowed briefly by that of a mask with manic like grin, eyes of darkness and laughter, and a sound that haunted those that heard it in that house and later all who heard it, of dark laughter, of laughter at pain and misery.

Several days passed- Harry helped the others clean out Sirius' old house- with nothing happening. Harry plotted and planned as well as studied all of the books "thrown out" and some still in the library, but

nothing could be done yet. No one here- save perhaps Mrs. Weasley, who had kept information from him- were on the wrong side of his account books, and anyway he already had his first target in mind:

Severus Snape.

It finally drew to that precious first day of school. Harry found himself a booth next to Neville Longbottom, Ginny Weasley, and a strange-looking girl whose eyeballs were too big for her head. Ginny announced that her name was Luna Lovegood. Shortly afterwards, Neville's new pet cactus showered him with gunk, seconds before Cho Chang- a girl Harry had been planning to manipulate happened to look inside. Harry became almost angry enough with Longbottom to harm him but remembered that Neville was more powerful than she in combat from what his magic sight could see. Harry had many plans and knew much.

He knew that Neville would be best as a water elemental. Water well quite pure, Harry spat well thinking of pure thing, had its own darkness as did all the elements. The true darkest of the elements was the only one that actually produced light. Fire was the darkest of the elements because its only purpose was destruction it had domain in lava and anything else that needed heat including light itself. After that was Air the gremlin that it was. It had the most powerful explosives in the world at its command and a simple word and it could destroy great amounts of things Air was natural disaster almost incarnate It controls tornadoes, tsunamis, hurricanes the only thing it didn't control was earthquakes and eruptions in volcanoes and even then it control where the death cloud, and rubble went and how suffocating ash was. Air was a great but equal element with all the others. Earth had gravity and lava that by itself was enough to equal the others. Water was pure and cleansing, well being patient and never ending. Water was everywhere and a good water elemental could drown you by using your own body's water.

Ginny on the other hand would be a great Air elemental or Necromancer because, even though she didn't know he had absorbed the piece of Riddle's soul, which he had only realized when his rage had first shown, she willingly went along with Riddle and chaos like any air elemental or elemental would. Cho had potential as a Enchanter because her family was in the business

and she had access to runes that no one else would because of it and she might even get her family and some others to join them some even from outside of the United Kingdoms or even Europe. Luna had potential as a seer or an enchanter but she could be any number of other things since he didn't know her so well.

Harry himself would make a great either Shadow elemental/elemental or Necromancer. Harry had great potential as a Necromancer because he had had death magic flow through him before now. He had great potential as a shadow elemental/elemental because he had literally spent over 2 thirds of his life in shadows in the cupboard. He could become an elemental eventually because Shadow, or darkness as it was really called, really wasn't a prime element and so its energy source wasn't sentient like the prime elements were. Becoming an elemental however was a difficult thing, in and of itself. Elementals are usually those that have their souls consumed by their element, or the more unusual path was to become a true master of the element so much so that the element becomes a part of you, seeing as how his element was not sentient he had to go with # 2 and because he wanted to keep his soul/mind. Harry ideally noted that they had arrived.

Although several things happened between this time and the time of Sorting, none of it was of note to Harry- save perhaps the new teachers. One was one of those who had voted against him- her name turned out to be Umbridge. Harry grinned when he saw her- a very cruel decision had delivered this woman to his hands. When Snape was dead, Harry would see to her, like he would all of his enemies.

The first week, Harry avoided trouble- he almost raised to the bait several times in Umbridge's class, but thinking of her eventual demises prevented him from losing his temper and ripping her throat out in front of oh so many witnesses. It was vital that he not get detention- he had a special subject he was studying- the art of pushing.

There were so many ways you could shove someone, he was discovering. And that was what he planned for Severus Snape to discover very soon.

Sunday, First Week of Hogwarts School

The day that two things of import happened, related very heavily- the day Harry Potter learned telekinesis and Severus Snape died.

Harry had been in the library every spare second, researching what the wizards termed "Mind Magic" the magic of the mind. He learned a particular kind of mind magic, Telekinesis. Telekinesis was discovered by a muggle-born and as such was greatly discredited and soon forgotten. He had no trouble out of the others- only Hermione and Ron asked him anything, and he said that he wanted to see what ways he could use his mind for. It was a good enough cover lie and neither of his friends wanted to talk much about it since both didn't know much about mind magic.

Harry had narrowed down his search on useful mind magic. The only things he found were Legilimency, Occlumency, Telekinesis, Pyrokinesis (setting things on fire with your mind), Cryokinesis (turning things to ice with your mind) and empathy but that was a bit more of a talent than anything else. Harry chose Telekinesis and Legilimency and practiced every day. At first, just getting the concentration was tiring, and his mind could only move small objects- feathers, hats, socks. But in two days of almost constant practice, he found he could move larger objects- his heavy books, his dresser, and once when no one was looking, he had used it to trip Neville Longbottom. Everyone had laughed and figured that Neville had tripped on his own feet- but Harry knew better and helped him back up without laughing at him.

Neville's trip meant Snape's death was near.

Harry's plan was very simple. He would wait outside the top of the stairs leading up from Slytherin House with his Invisibility Cloak on. He would wait until he saw Snape and then wait for a perfect opportunity. When Snape got to the perfect location, Harry was going to hurl all his might at him. Snape would fall- breaking his back and skull against the stone wall seeing Harry laugh at the sight of him before vanishing.

Harry waited that night inside his cloak, an expectant look on his face. Strands of hair fell into his face, and his lips curled in a strange snarl. Anyone who could gaze at him then, through his cloak, would swear they had glimpsed a demon hidden in human skin. He could

feel the shadows around him curling and moving to hide him even further from view and when he moved it muffled sound. The very shadows moved for him. He truly looked like a demon with a wave of shadows right behind him, his eyes lighting a green light just like an Avada Kedavra, his black hair looking one with shadows, his snarl like that of a beast from the very depths of the Abyss that which shadow originated from, His scar glowing crimson like that of fresh blood. His body however was not quite up to making his appearance any better. He had been getting bigger but was still quite lanky.

He saw rather than heard Snape walk by the stairs with his billowing cloak. Snape was walking with an unusual smile on his face like when he was going to bust a Gryffindor. Harry thought 'enjoy your last smile'. He reached the top of the stairs near the Hufflepuff dorm. Harry shoved with all his might. Harry had a very pleasant view of Snape's face, looking perplexed and confused then horror and finally hatred as he saw Harry, as he saw that his body was falling over the banister. He was already past when he noticed Harry. They meet eyes and soon Harry had all he wanted. Snape never even screamed even as skull popped like a balloon as and his body broke from the high fall.

After entering his cloak again and making sure no one seen him not even the portraits. Inside his cloak, Harry grinned. The darkness closed around him. Welcoming him home and into something that was truly what he was meant to be. Laughter could be heard in the halls that night.

It was a week after Snape's death. The school still rang with news and rumors of it. Although Harry had immediately been suspected- the hate between him and Snape was an old wound- he was cleared of it soon enough. Oddly, the suspicion landed on Goyle, who had last been seen with him in their stress, the inhabitants of Slytherin had changed events in their mind to include Goyle shoving Snape off because an argument with him about something that had Goyle very upset in the Dormitories after. Crabbe attempted to clear Goyle, but then Slytherin lumped them together and decided they were tired of Snape's attitude and had decided to give him a free trip to the bottom of the stairs. Both were expelled two days later.

Draco was soon an exile in the dormitories. He was under suspicions that he had helped them since he was the leader of those

goons. Maybe he had a bad grade and had Goyle try to prank him and Goyle went too far. Draco was a tyrant and king in the dormitories before, now he was pariah. Few approached him any more those that did where Daphne Greengrass, Blaise Zabini, and Tracey Davis.

On that same day, Dumbledore had held a meeting, and everyone in school was gathered. Even those who didn't like Snape were shocked by his end, and that two students had been responsible for it, more importantly that two Slytherins were responsible. Harry kept his face shocked but happy the proper face of someone who has just realized his worst enemy is dead, but inside he was laughing and raving. He was going to manipulate all that he need to and take all that he wanted. He would recruit from Slytherin and they would be some of his best people.

He had many reasons to laugh. One was simple enough. Severus Snape was dead, and little could spoil the humor that brought on. The second was more complex. He had found his place in the great scheme, not that of hero, but that of monster. And he was enjoying the hell out of it. He would take his pieces and make a game of this yet.

Another good reason for chuckling was that he had formed the D.A, this group, Dumbledore's Army, was formed to perform Defense against the Dark Arts in the student's spare time- ever since Umbridge's first class, the bitch had made Defense against the Dark Arts a joke. She had also gained power, being named High Inquisitor the day after Snape's death. Oh well. Things couldn't always be perfect, as Harry found out.

The D.A. was going to change soon, although they didn't know it. Already he had moved them from approved jinxes and hexes into completely different spells- channeling and chanting, spells far more powerful than mere jinxes. Already Neville Longbottom- who seemed determined to become the best at these new spells- could perform the chant that made him a shadow and let him pass unseen, and Hermione could create a blizzard that froze anything in its path, She was rather good at cold spells. Whenever anyone asked why they were studying such powerful spells, he simply replied, "Because Voldemort is." That stopped further queries. Dumbledore's army- which Harry hoped to make Potter's Army soon- was growing

by leaps and bounds, both in numbers and power. They would soon also have Slytherins in their numbers.

These were his usual reasons for laughing inside, but today he had a new reason.

Draco and the Slytherins would be joining him today.

What he would do was, like his plan for Snape, simple enough. Draco was now a pariah in Slytherin and some of the other Pariah would have approached him by now. Most of the female side of Slytherin were both treated as sex slave/toys and accepted the position or they became pariahs. Any with intelligent choose the second option. Draco even though a Pariah still held sway over those in the lower grades.

What he would do was prove that Draco was innocent. By saving a pariah in Slytherin the other pariahs would come to him so that they could become stronger. The female side so that they can escape the grasps of those that wanted them as sex toys/slaves or just wanted a friend.

What he would do was take a pensive to the dungeons and show what happened that night from Draco's point of view after he did some things to his memories. He slipped into the dungeons, then into the Slytherin common room, then finally into Draco's personal room.

He modified the memories of Draco, woke him and said that he didn't think that Draco had killed Snape and started to explain his plan Draco reacted nicely and even said both in his mind and his voice that he would have killed Snape given the chance like most Slytherins. Draco told Harry that Snape simple brought to much negative attention when they prefer positive (for them) attention, soon after they left the room, Harry going before Draco and going to the side then Draco left after. Draco called for everyone to come down and the whole of Slytherin came together in the common room.

Harry showed himself and asked Draco to take the memory of the night before and put it into the pensive that he pulled from inside his cloak. Draco did so and it showed he had minimal contact with the goons before they 'killed' Snape.

That night, Harry sat in the Gryffindor common room alone. He lifted up a small vial in his hand, and smiled. The light the full hearth gave the room reflected off his eyes, but didn't go in them. The darkness there was too complete to be pierced by mere firelight. The smile seemed as if it would suddenly turn to rending jaws. He had new supporters and he would soon kill Umbridge. The vial looked like something that most would consider pure being of silver in coloring, but it was one of the darkest things in the world, the ability to manipulate shadows and darkness something that Snape had made. It had been made for him to escape if a plan went awry. Harry drank it down and would learn and control his power over shadow the potion only applied what he had of control over it a bit sooner then without it. But soon every second would count.

The jester in Harry Potter's soul began to laugh again.

It was the laughter of the darkness in the souls of all beings. It was the laughter at the pain to others that was to come. Even though he was going to destroy many things he would rebuild from what he had destroyed and some things would avoid the purge of destruction.

I hope you like it and no I don't have the permission of the original author but I did try to get it and after a few months of no reply I decide to just do it. and I change it around quite a bit.

Silver Out

Mrs. Umbridge sat in her office, surrounded by gamboling kittens upon her lampshade. She was reading the latest letter from Fudge, who was ranting about how Dumbledore must be kept in his place. That was when she heard a swishing noise in front of her. Thinking it was the wind or something, she continued reading.

Harry stood silently in front of her, hidden by his Invisibility Cloak. He grinned as she ignored the small swishing noise his cloak made as it touched the floor.

(Pitiful woman,) he thought.

Harry was here for a single reason- to kill Umbridge- but the time wasn't right yet. He wanted her full and undivided attention when the time came- and his new powers demanded she die at midnight the darkest minute in the day.

It was 11:55.

To pass the time, Harry reflected on the past events of the week. Snape had died a week earlier, and the school was still in an uproar- which made it easy for Cho Chang to sneak into Snape's Potions class and steal ingredients. That girl was very useful.

Harry's smile under the cloak broadened. He had completely changed the members of the D.A., and it was so simple! He'd thought the members of the D.A., especially those of Gryffindor, would be more stubborn in defending their values, but when you showed them certain paths... they fell into darkness.

Neville Longbottom, in his wish to avenge his parents, had been easy enough to convince of taking on Elemental magics. He was becoming good at that magic as well. These magics, banned to all who were not in the specialized Orders of the Ministry, called on the four cardinal forces to empower the user. Neville had chosen Water, and even now he could breathe underwater, turn water to ice, and summon ferocious torrents of water from the ground. Neville was very clearly enjoying his new powers, and he had become far more vicious in its use. He would become a force to be reckoned within months.

Cho Chang, on the other hand, wasn't convinced by revenge, but by knowledge. He offered her access to any and all rune that they had

and she would do anything for him. She could now inscribe runes on anything- cloaks, swords, wands, doors- and she had inscribed Sirius' knife to become an even more powerful lockpick. Her boots were inscribed so that she made no sound, and she had used these talents to steal from Snape.

Luna Lovegood had embraced the dark spells more easily than all but him self and Ginny. She planned on being a dark spellcaster. Now dark spell casters were different than anything else in that they do massive amounts of damage to everything around them. They are like the demolition experts of the magic realm. She had embraced it so thoroughly that she was teaching others.

Draco Malfoy was embracing his name quite thoroughly. He was becoming a Beast Tamer. More particular he was becoming Dragon and Drake tamer. He planned to be able to control any creature that he happened to run across. He was already controlling some of the more mindless creatures in the forbidden forest.

Daphne Greengrass was becoming an up and up assassin. Her stealth skills up to his already and she was learning light spells and dark spell to make it look like it could be anyone who killed the person. She probable was the only person that had more spells at her command than Harry himself.

Tracey Davis was a fear caster. She was learning how to make her very presence cast fear on those around her. She would then use that fear to make her spells. The spells can make mind mages completely insane. She was their interrogator, torturer, slaver, and she was good at what she did. She said she would only teach 8 students and she wouldn't allow them to teach others till she thought those others were ready. Harry was immune to her spells thanks to his powers since his powers revolved around the darkest end, darkness, relive, necromancy, and Madness itself, beyond what fear could reach.

Blaise Zabini was becoming their public relations. She was trained just like everyone else but she wasn't a major fighter but instead a manipulator. She was their person to influence others, and she was a natural empathic. So she understood what her target was feeling and how to change that so they saw her point of view. She was their manipulator

It was now 11:57.

These and other examples were typical of what the D.A. was becoming. But there had been losses- Hermione and Ron, for instance, had taken a quarter of the D.A. and run off with it. They were hiding out somewhere in the school- the events of the past few days were enough so that Harry couldn't devote time to hunt his old friends down and then deal with them.

Harry mused over where they could be, and then banished it from his mind. No matter. Deal with Umbridge, then with them.

He took his cloak off and stepped into the light. Umbridge gave a start.

"Who are you? What are you doing here?" she shrieked, than noticing it was Harry, her big toad-like eyes widened as she grinned. "Oh, I think this will warrant an expulsion, Mr. Potter. Not very smart to be in a -"

Her sentence cut off as she saw the maniacal grin on his face.

"What are you doing?" she asked, the question almost whispered, fear shown on her face. "What are you planning, Potter?"

Harry looked down at her. He was feeling very happy at the moment. "Oh, I was just going to show you something-"

With that, he gave her a low, mocking bow- and darkness so black that the shadows around it were bright in comparison covered him. Then they too turned as black as the shadows that covered him. Umbridge covered her eyes- the blackness was so complete it was almost like a bright flash of light in a dark room.

When she looked again, Harry Potter was gone, and in his place stood the Jester of Madness and death.

His shoes had curled, pointed ends, much like a court jester's- but with really laughing skulls instead of bells on the end. That laughed instead of jingled. The legs of his suit were enlarged at the bottom, but thinned at the top. His body was covered in paintings of faces in agony, or laughing, and his arms- with the same odd thin-at-top-and-large-on-bottom design of his legs- ended in claws that glittered

wickedly in the firelight. His face was covered by a jester's mask that showed a lunatic, maniac, and truly psychotic grin. The crown on top was almost like a normal jester's, but just like the shoes, the points ended in laughing skulls.

Harry extended his new hands and laughed. The laughter seemed to come from everywhere at once and be other worldly something that humanity could not comprehend.

"Oh my dear Umbridge," the masked monster said, in a voice that sounded at once both deep as a mine and high as a tower, "an expulsion is the least of my worries."

The laughter assaulted Umbridge's ears again. She backed off, picking up her wand and waving it and the transformed Harry.

"STAY AWAY!" she shrieked. "I'LL KILL YOU! AVADA KEDAVRA!"

A green light flashed forward in a whisper of something dark echoed across the room. Harry slapped it aside as if it were nothing but a mere bug.

"Oh, little, little girl," he said, laughing again. "I am beyond your powers. But I have no more time to talk- for it is midnight now. Both for you- and for the world..." He created chains that bound her from the shadows.

Umbridge screamed only once as Harry's claws ripped her face apart. And the laughter echoed and echoed...

Cornelius Fudge sat in his room, below the earth within the Ministry of Magic, and worried about the situation at Hogwarts. Things were bad at the school.

Very bad.

Firstly, a teacher- one Mr. Snape- had died, but there was little trouble- he wasn't well-known or well-liked. And then the kicker- if this was a bad joke, the last event was a punchline-

Dolores Umbridge had been murdered.

Although murdered was a very light term indeed for what had happened to her. She had been torn apart, as if a bear had decided to turn her inside out. The only part of her that was really identifiable was her right arm, which had a hideous tattoo on it- a laughing skull, adorned with a jester's hat, laughing maniacally.

And, of course, her eyes, which had been ripped out and placed on her night stand, staring grotesquely at the Inquisitors from the Ministry.

And that wasn't the end of it, either. A huge portion of the school was gone, a portion that included Harry Potter. They weren't dead, they were just... gone. Fudge looked the list over again. He saw (but did not notice) the names of Neville Longbottom, Hermione Granger, Ron Weasley, Luna Lovegood and many others that, in a different day and age that seemed centuries ago, were part of the D.A.

Fudge had been considering shutting Hogwarts down, and tonight he was drafting the legislation to do it.

Behind him, hidden in shadows both real and magical, Harry Potter grinned.

[What a damn fool,] Harry thought, and stilled a burst of the maniacal laughter that always hid just below the surface inside him. Thinking that shutting down Hogwarts would stop him!

The man had no idea what Harry had in mind- a plan that would make Voldemort look like a mewling child. Harry meant to become more than a dark lord-

He was going to become a dark god.

But that was still in the future. At the moment, he would settle for taking Cornelius Fudge's oversized head from his shoulders. Although Cornelius himself was no problem, the Ministry itself might be... but if it was in anarchy and disorder before Harry began making his moves, then the threat was nullified. So long as he could hid in the shadows he would so as to hide his presence from bigger powers

Harry grinned, as he made brief, telepathic contact with the five other members of the Black Tide, as his new army was calling itself,

who were currently inside the Ministry or at other key points. He made a quick, curious glance over them, and liked what he saw.

A level or two above him, hiding inside a water tank as a small fish, Neville Longbottom awaited Kingsley Shacklebolt, a Auror who was simply too dangerous to allow to live much longer. Although powerful, Shacklebolt was nothing compared to Neville Longbottom. Even Harry was surprised, and if he didn't know that Neville would never betray him, he would be slightly scared as well, at how much he had changed.

In the course of revenge, Neville had made an oath in front of them all. The oath was simple. "I swear, by all that lies in this world, that if I must be damned to kill Voldemort, then damned will I be!" That oath meant he would do anything at all, if it meant Voldemort's head on a long, sharp stick. Neville had become a powerful Water warlock, and his magics now allowed him to change himself into various aquatic creatures. He was going to pierce Shacklebolt's heart with a spear of ice when the Auror turned his back.

Waiting two floors above that, Cho Chang was nestled quite comfortably in Harry's Invisibility Cloak. Wrapped in it, she was awaiting Lucius Malfoy, who thought he was coming in to discuss tax matters with a senior Ministry official- Harry had sent this letter himself, with Cho Chang copying the runic signature of the Ministry, but he was really going to his final meeting, one with death, a death that had a very sharp and very enchanted knife that would plunge through his heart named Everbite.

On the same level as himself Blaise was turning one of the Auror's to their side, one Nymphadora Tonks. She would be their spy on the ministry should it get out of the chaos that it was soon to be in. She would change Shacklebolt's corpse to look like her own and then take his place. What she wanted for it was her rightful place as the Lady of Black, which was being arranged as they spoke. Someone was already hunting down Sirius, Draco would not take the place, his mother was soon to be among the dead at his own hand as well giving him like Luna, Tracey and Ginny very vile power over their chosen profession, and Bellatrix was soon to be assassinated in her very cell by one Daphne Greengrass who was a rather distant cousin and would be gaining the dark objects from her personal and family vault because of the Lestranger's deaths. Tonk's Mother was

already poisoned by them and soon Tonk's would be the only one who would get the money.

Miles away near a cottage 'Mad Eye' Moody was arriving at a house for a meeting with some old Auror friends of his. Luna waited just outside of his eyes reach. Ready to destroy the cottage and those inside because they were all too dangerous to continue being among the living. After that she was planning on going and killing her father so that she may have more power in her Dark Spell Casting.

In another section of the Ministry, awaiting Arthur Weasley, Ginny Weasley was clinging to the ceiling above the door. Amid the clutter and junk that was Mr. Weasley's trademark, he'd never see his beloved daughter. Of the five he had brought with him, Ginny, Draco, Tracey and Luna had the greatest potential of them all. Cho Chang had her uses, Neville more so, but Ginny, Tracey, Draco and Luna—they were dark. That was the best word for it. Harry didn't know how long the bonds of knowledge would keep Cho Chang in his grasp, and Neville would always serve him, and more than likely secretly hate doing it, but only they enjoyed what they did. Harry had given Ginny this job to see how well she did, he expected her to refuse when he asked her to kill her father, but she jumped at the chance. She thought it would be great fun, and already she said she could see many different magics that would be made possible by such a dark murder.

She had told Harry (when he'd asked what she meant) that she was going to become a Necromancer. This delighted Harry, he'd been sent into gales of laughter at the thought, because it meant that he would now have an aide as he was researching and doing small Necromancy. Calling on the dead and binding them was dangerous work when done alone, and now that he had another Necromancer to help him, he would finally be able to call the dead to do his work. All Ginny needed to satisfy the dark demon who would train her in these arts was the blood of a relative. Harry had thought of Ron, but Ron and Hermione had slipped off with the rest of the D.A. No one had seen hide or hair of them in a week.

And Ginny wanted to kill Mr. Weasley. She was going to present his dead body to the demon on a silver platter, and she knew the demon would be delighted.

Harry grinned again under his mask. Everyone was ready. It was time to begin. He stepped out of shadow, once more the Jester, and picked Cornelius Fudge's considerable weight up with one hand by the shoulder.

"Wha- ugh!" Fudge had time to ask, as Harry flung him into the nearest wall. The wall shook violently as it took the brunt of the force.

"Hello, Fudge," Harry said, laughing again.

"Who the hell...!" Fudge's eyes widened in horror and shock as he connected the Jester in front of him with the one burned onto Umbridge's dead arm.

"Oh God," he moaned, trying to get to his feet- the blow had left his limbs numb, and the spot where Harry had grabbed him was numb, like it had been shot with a pain killer. "You... you're the one who killed Umbridge, aren't you?"

Harry broke out laughing, a laugh that Fudge found terrifying. "I do claim that honor. I believe I have done the world a favor in removing that woman from it- Darwin's laws, you know. Survival of the fittest- why, I do believe I've done the entire gene pool a grand favor in eliminating her from it." More maddening laughter was heard from behind his mask.

"You... what in God's name are you?" Fudge asked, noting that the room was suddenly much colder than it had been- and that the fire, which before had burned merrily in it's fireplace across the room, had suddenly dimmed to the point of extinction.

"Well... that's an easy question and a hard one. The easy answer- I'm Harry Potter."

"What?" Fudge asked, completely surprised by this answer.

"And the hard answer-" Harry continued, lifting his hand to his mask and ignoring Fudge completely, "is that I am-" he grabbed the mask and pulled it off with a single jerking motion- "THIS."

Fudge's single, choked scream emerged from his lips into the sound-proofed room. Laughter followed it- a dog of madness for a shot of fear.

In another room, several murders were played out- but none as hideous as the patricide of Arthur Weasley.

Clinging to the ceiling with ease, Ginny was conversing with the evil creature- which identified itself as a Dream Nightmare- with which she had made her compact.

"Strike him down," the demon, which appeared only to her, in the shape of a vast, undefined mass of swirling souls and chaos, whispered to her, "With the weapon I have given you. Do not harm his skull, or I will not accept this offering."

"As you will," she said, bowing her head slightly.

"He comes," it stated simply, then vanished before her. She smiled. Now was her chance to shine- even if it was a dark shine...

Although Ginny had never told anyone other than her new master about it, Ginny had never been fully possessed by Tom Riddle. Rather, she willingly went along with Riddle when he asked her to kill- to smear cryptic messages on the walls in blood- and any other things he had asked of her. It had been the one time she felt truly alive. And now she had gained her life again- under Harry Potter's rule.

She had once asked the Nightmare if she should kill Harry. It had responded quite fiercely to her, breaking its usually calm pattern: "NO! Harry Potter is to be kept alive and served well. He will consume this world into a pattern of evil that will be millennia in the fixing- If it ever gets fixed at all. Harry is vital to the damnation of this world. Serve him, Ginny, if you ever become tired of being his servant, simply leave. I have other places for you, and Harry is too important here to be touched."

She had no problem with that, however; her question was mere curiosity.

Steps in the hall and she instantly focused on what would happen next; all thought was brushed from her mind. It was time.

Her father stepped in, not looking up, as she knew he wouldn't, and moving on. She dropped to the floor, and then stood up, whistling as she did so.

"What? Ginny?" he said, seeing her. "What are you doing he-"

He stopped as he saw the twin wings sprouting from her back. Leather wings, and though she could not spread them in the cramped office, their size was evident, as were the claws on the tips.

"Well, Father," she said, answering his unfinished question, "I'm here to begin my training as a Necromancer, and to do that you must die. I'd say I'm sorry," she shrugged, with a smirk on her face, before adding, "But to tell the truth, I'm delighted to kill you as are the others that have done so to their parents before me."

"You're wha- aah!" he cried out. Ginny had stunned his muscles with a single word.

"Now, now, father," she said, a childish, wicked, and sinister smile on her face. "You can't really expect me to just allow you to move as you wish, can you? Now hold still, while I finish ripping your heart out for my new friend."

Her wings transformed into energy, which reshaped itself into a hellish claw. It launched out, piercing Arthur Weasley's chest and ripping out his heart. He died silently, blood pouring out of his mouth and chest.

As she held out the still-warm heart to the Dream Nightmare which had appeared above her, Ginny smiled.

As Mr. Weasley was having his heart jerked out of his chest, Neville Longbottom floated on the bottom of a water tank inside Kingsley Shacklebolt's room and brooded.

He didn't know what to think of his new-found powers- and what he was doing with them. He weighed the decisions like one would weigh two objects in the hands.

One side- what Neville thought of as his preferred hand right-hand side- he was far more powerful than he'd ever dreamed. He was no longer a joke to anyone; instead of being the boy who couldn't cast

Stupefy to save his life, he was a Water Warlock, lord of the seas, capable of controlling the cold and the waters about him and the creatures which lived in it. He'd spent several pleasant hours conversing with the merfolk about Hogwarts Castle, and discovered that the giant squid was very intelligent- smarter, in fact, than the merfolk themselves. With its help, Neville had discovered a new entrance into Hogwarts- one hidden in the moat. He had memorized its location- he could enter it anytime. Harry had been very pleased with the discovery, emitting that strange maddening laugh of his when told.

Thinking of memorizing the hidden door would have brought a smile to Neville's face, if he hadn't been a fish at the moment. Water was the element of memory and time, and because of its influence on him, he had now discovered he could memorize things now. It was much more pleasant to remember things on your own without using a Remembrall.

And last of all (but nowhere near least), he was SOMEBODY. That last seemed almost more important than his need for revenge. Harry had been organizing the Black Tide recently, and many new positions had been created. Neville had been given two positions; General Commander of Elemental Magicks, and Member of the Ebony Flame, the special group whose main job was protecting and advising Harry Potter. This meant that, in the new army that was forming, he was a major mover and shaker.

But... not everything was right. On the bad- or left-hand side- of his situation was the fact that what he was doing was wrong. He knew this as instinctively as a dog knows to bark at strangers. He would hear his grandmother's voice in his mind at times, shouting, "You are disgusting and a disgrace to your family!" Neville didn't like it, but he knew that voice was right.

And Harry Potter had changed. Ever since Umbridge died, which Neville had no problem with; that woman had deserved to die, he was different. His laughter, before the normal laughter of a teenager, was now edged with something dark maybe madness. Neville would have believed Harry was insane if he didn't know different.

He felt vibrations in the glass about the water. Someone was coming- a big someone, from the feel. Neville pushed the thoughts away- Shackbolt was arriving.

[Your oath,] Neville thought to himself, as Kingsley Shacklebolt prepared to open the door to his room one last time, [Above all else, remember your oath and honor it.]

Neville's fish body seemed to sigh. [Yes, Neville,] he thought.

[Remember your oath.]

Kingsley Shacklebolt stepped into the room just as Neville was thinking these thoughts. He looked about, saw nothing unusual, not noticing the little fish in his aquarium that hadn't been there this morning, and went over to the shelf he kept his antidotes in. As luck would have it, this shelf was directly across from the hiding place of Neville Longbottom. Neville concentrated. Water rose out of the aquarium, and as Neville bent it to his will, it formed a long shaft about 3 feet long. It froze into ice instantly, with a "snick!" sound.

Shacklebolt, his ears tuned to all noises around him from his long history as an Auror, whirled around. His turn was just quick enough for the spear of frost to enter the front of his chest and explode out the back, showering his shelf with blood.

Neville's fish body leaped out of the water, changing to human as it went. The fish body sprouted a blue cloak and when Neville landed, he was human. The last part to form was the pendant on his chest, the symbol of Water- a dark, sea-blue sapphire.

He looked at the body for a moment, shook his head, and stepped out, speaking five words as he went, a farewell for the tombstone the room had become:

"I will remember my oath." He then grabbed all the antidotes and left.

Some distance from the final resting place of Kingsley Shacklebolt, Cho Chang waited, invisibly, for Lucius Malfoy to arrive. Like Neville, she, too, was brooding.

But for her, there were few negatives in her new position.

Cho Chang had intended to become an Enchanter even before meeting Harry- it was a family business. Her mother had called it, "the art of magic," and Cho firmly believed that. She had loved

watching her mother painstakingly carve a rune- on anything, be it wood, metal, or fabric- and then watching the enchantment work. Her mom had once enchanted a chair to fly, and little Cho, who was five at the time, had clapped and laughed almost till she cried.

Now Cho thought she had all she could ever want. She had access to hundreds to thousands of runes, and Harry had given her complete freedom to carve them. She had the resources now not grand by Ministry standards, but enough to carve runes as she desired. She could even use the ones the Ministry had forbidden everything was hers!

All in all, if you could get over a little unpleasantness like what was going to happen tonight, she thought, life was grand.

At that point, Lucius Malfoy stepped in, wearing his traditional black cape and carrying his staff. Eerily similar to both Neville and Ginny before her, all of Cho Chang's thoughts left her, and she waited for him to come closer before making her move. An enchanted knife- one she had made herself, and christened "Everbite"- was held in her hand, the way a fencer holds his sword. Lucius looked about, and cursed under his breath.

"Damn that man! Where is he?"

Looking about, he finally went over to the chair that Cho had hidden in front of. Holding Everedge in front of her, she lifted the cloak up just as he finished sitting down.

"Harry Potter sends his greetings," she said, exactly as her love had told her. She jabbed Lucius in the throat, Everbite splitting the flesh and muscles there as easily as a hot knife through butter. Blood spurted between the edges of the flesh.

"Wha- ugh..." was all Lucius could manage as blood poured out of his wound.

"And my weapons," she continued, whispering and leaning in close over the dying Death Eater, "will give the same greetings to your master."

She broke out laughing, the high-pitched laughter of a girl who was insane and happy about it.

Some distance away, Harry heard her, and smiled.

Maybe she wasn't so useless, after all.

Luna was not debating inside her head like the two before her. She was simply waiting for the gore, blood and organs to come shooting out of the house. She loved watching as blood flowed from someone and she had joined Harry because he had the most opportunity to make blood flow. She watched as the eye and eyepatch of Mad Eye came fly toward her. She caught it and left to kill her father.

Each Black Tide member escaped through predetermined routes. Neville turned into a fish and swam out through the Ministry's water supply; Ginny was already gone, having entered the darker planes of existence with her demon master to learn Necromancy. Cho used Harry's invisibility cloak to sneak out without being detected- her goal was a guard post that several other Black Tide members were stationed at. They would draw the guard off with a distraction, and she would proceed through unnoticed by his special powers of surveillance. Harry, who required no such help, had merely stepped into shadow and reappeared in the shadow of a huge oak within the Dark Forest, where the Black Tide was currently staying.

As he stepped out, he looked around. All about him lay various tents- the abodes of his Black Tide. Inside each, he could see the members. Seamus, who had become Captain of the Marauders (what Harry planned on being the rank and file members of his army) was talking with some, apparently creating different classes of soldiers. A snatch drifted over to him:

"We need a group dedicated to those new weapons Harry brought us- the Muggle ones- flamethrowers, I think he called them. Cho Chang and her group have finished enchanting them, and so I'm creating a special group dedicated to them. You're the first of them. And about the name..."

"Purgers!" someone yelled.

"Yeah! We'll burn and purge this world anew for Harry Potter, the Jester King!"

Harry burst out laughing at this. [They've nick-named me,] he thought, between bursts of his laughter. [The Jester King?]

He continued laughing as he approached. The boy who had shouted out the words "Jester King" quailed now, apparently scared he'd offended Harry.

"S-Sir, I didn't mean a-any disrespect," he said, stammering and shaking.

"None taken," Harry said, still giggling slightly. "I like it. The Jester King! An excellent name, young man. Who are you?"

The soldier spoke quickly, quite clearly excited at having said something Harry enjoyed. "My name is Terry Boot, sir."

Harry thought for a moment. Ah, yes, he remembered now... he had been at Harry's first meeting with the Sorting Hat, so long ago.

"Well, then, Sir Boot, I think Jester King is a perfect name for me. And Purgers," he said, including them all in the sweep of his gaze, "is also a perfect name for this group."

They all nodded enthusiastically. "And, everyone," he said, finishing with a little conceit of his own, "remember! We are the Black Tide, the force that will sweep away all things! We will cover this land! Remember!"

They all cheered loudly as Potter left.

He chuckled again, and looked into the night sky. The moon was full, and gazing on the world as it had for centuries.

Harry's chuckling burst out once more in full-fledged laughter. The thought that sparked this outburst was this.

[Even you, old one, have never seen anything like me.]

[And you never will again.]

To the mother-fucking idiot that is too cowardly to sign his actually name and put Blah on the reviews. Harry impulsive event, as you said, was the realization that quite frankly everyone had abandoned him at one point or another and that his life was quite fuck up. He realized those who were responsible and so he decided that he wanted to take over his life and the lives of others. Also water is what gives life to plants they can live without earth for over a day, but not without air or water. Water, earth and air are the more live related elements. But all are just as destructive as fire. Also Air is related to necromancy in that air is what gives us life well Necromancy is the ability to bring life back.

Harry glanced about himself in the Great Hall, he had some of the Earth and Water Elementalists create it by using their magics to meld the various trees in the Dark Forest into an arch, and the result was quite impressive. Harry thought it added a nice touch to the meetings, lending an air of awe to the audience which he found quite helpful.

Harry's glance noted the Purgers. It was a week since they'd first met on the day Cornelius Fudge died (along with several others) and they were barely recognizable. Each of them, standing in five lines of ten, were decked out in the orange suit and hoods made from wyvern's hide that kept them from being burned. Each of them had gloves of sharkskin that allowed them to grip their weapons. And in each hand, they held their Skull-Masters. These weapons had started life as flamethrowers, but now the only thing that would recall that ancestor was the fire pack, mounted now underneath their suits so to protect it so that a random spell didn't make them leak. A lance had been used as the firing end, and the tip always slowly dripped a combustible material. It was made by a multiple potions and spells that were created or made by the commander of the Purgers and Terry was the only one who knew the particular spells and potion combination. Terry had made it so that it only caught fire from charms on the lance. He also gave them packs that would recharge the Skull-masters by remove from the main store that he had hidden. When they concentrated, the Purgers could fire long, acidic streams of flame from these lance tips. The fire would consume almost anything short of a dragon- and even they would be burnt from the fires. Terry Boot, who Harry had instituted as their commander, wore a sweeping helmet that had dragon wings emitting from the sides. He stood at the front of them, clearly pleased to be leading them into

their first battle. He only took commands directly from Seamus or Harry himself.

Alongside them, to the left, over a hundred strong and growing were the black-armored Marauders. The Marauders were Harry's terror squad and basic soldiers who would be the first to attack. The Marauders no longer had any recognizable wands. Instead, they packed odd, curved swords. In wizard warfare, wands were a liability- they were fine for dueling, but when it came to real, open warfare, wands weren't good enough- the most they could do was pick on single targets at short ranges. Thanks to the charms and runes from the Enchanters these swords were made. The swords of the Marauders allowed them to cast their spells over a wide area, simply by swinging them while casting, the curved blade causing the spell to spread out. And when they got close enough, the swords were wonderful tools to chop heads off with and for melee combat. Seamus, who was the commander of them, wore black armor with runes engraved all about it to ward off magic. He had the grim, satisfied look of a man who has just seen his worst enemy die quite horribly.

And beside them, again to the left, were the assorted magicians, with their leaders in front of them. The Elementalists, led by Neville Longbottom, wore the robes of their orders and carried staffs made by the Enchanter's guild. Each staff had a gem representing the owner's Element- sapphire for Water, ruby for Fire, emerald for Earth, and diamond for Air. Neville himself wore an enormous sapphire on the front of his sea-blue robe. He looked resigned, as if he didn't like what he was doing, but would do it anyway.

Behind them was all that composed the Enchanter's guild. They were only 50 strong so far but they were making weapons faster than expected. The one to command them was Cho Chang who was mad for knowledge and use of that knowledge. She had even raided the Ministry to get all of its knowledge on runes after killing Malfoy senior. Cho had a mad gleam in her eye that spoke of insanity. Something welcome in the Black Tide.

Luna Lovegood and her students stood to the right of the Purgers. She and her students numbered at 11 but lived to see what their magics could do. Luna herself had completely destroyed her old family home just to see how much more powerful her magic was. They had taken the name of The Eclipse. Harry had been taken with

laughter when they had told him the other names Luna had considered.

Draco Malfoy and his men had gotten control of most of the forbidden forest by use of the more mindless creatures. They stood to the right of The Eclipse. They now numbered at 40. Draco was trying to collect a Nundu, Drake or Dragon to tame and use in combat. The rest were gaining companions as well but not quite as powerful. They had properly been called The Kraken.

Daphne was teaching her 'art' to others. They were the silent force behind his army and worked closest with Blaise and Tracey their leader's closest friends. Tracey captured some spies and turned them into blank slates for Daphne to draw upon. Daphne in turn, turns them into a powerful force of their once enemy. They both work for Blaise on assignments. They had become the Sword Fish. They were at the Great Hall.

Tracey had only started to teach one other and he was becoming a sadistic person. A submissive but sadistic person. Tracey herself knew so from 'playing' with her student and had it as a necessary part to become a fear caster. She had properly called her organization the Great White. Both were in the small section of the city made for them.

Harry nodded his head while overlooking his army. They were mighty, indeed. But they still lacked something... a something that tonight would provide.

He smiled at that. Ah, yes... this last week had been so entertaining...

Hogwarts had been shut down the day after Fudge had died. If the Ministry had any idea how much this would help Harry, they would have walked through hellfire and Skull-master fire to keep it operating.

The now-released students, who actually knew more of the situation than anyone else did, had split into two camps. Over a thousand people had joined the Black Tide- those disillusioned with the Ministry, Harry supposed. They had swelled his ranks quite nicely.

However, another portion, almost as large, had followed Ron, Hermione, and the former D.A. to Durmstrang, of all places.

Hermione's boyfriend, Viktor Krum, had arranged to let them stay there. They were calling themselves the White Shore, in opposition to Harry's Black Tide.

The two armies had yet to battle, but Harry was moving south-west. His first target:

Privet Drive.

The early morning of August 27. 3:00 in the morning.

The day the war began.

The day the Black Tide began to rise.

Every person in Privet Drive and the surrounding area- those few who lived, anyway- reported that their first indication of something wrong was a hellish, maddening laugh, a laugh that began nightmares for all those still asleep and worse for those awake.

Harry's men had secreted themselves in alleyways to wait for the signal. They would then strike- and most of their victims would still be asleep.

Seamus had hidden himself across from a nondescript little house. He had been personally assigned this job- Harry wanted the denizens of the house alive, all of them. Unbeknownst to him, this was the Dursley house.

He was in contact with his men through his helmet; Cho Chang's Enchanters had enchanted it to allow contact with his captains and the leaders of the other combat factions of the army. He talked to them now.

"Hey! Spithe! Vicks! Terry! Luna! Draco! It starts now! Did you get the signal?"

Spithe, a Hufflepuff student a year below Harry before the Tide swept him away, a mile away to the east, nodded. "Yep. Ready to go."

Vicks, a young Ravenclaw student before the Tide became his life, also nodded, a mile west of Seamus. "Yeah. I heard it."

Terry, a secret pyromaniac before this all started wanted to see what these Skull-Masters, could do. He was half a mile to the north of Seamus. "Yes my men and I are ready for the purge."

Luna, someone who wanted to test her power, gave the dreamy reply of "the Eclipse will start soon"

Draco, having learned to respect magical creatures after the hippogriff incident, said "we're all ready, we will show them their worse nightmares and why they should fear the dark"

Seamus cracked his knuckles and grabbed his sword. "Then what are you waiting for? ATTACK!"

Vicks and Spithe looked at their men, looked towards their targets, and yelled one word together, two miles apart:

"CHARGE!"

Terry and his men were a walking wall of fire, not being impatient like the others and just wanting to see it burn.

Luan gained a crazied look in her eyes and started her spells. Her students took after her and started theirs as well.

Draco and his men let lose the creatures they had brought with them. The chaos beasts took off in their many forms, some moving slowly, others moving more quickly then a speeding train. (Those that know of the Chao Beast from DND monster manual 1 That is what these things are based off)

Those who weren't woken by Harry's laughter were soon woken by the sound of breaking doors and windows... and by the tortured screams of the dying.

Spithe's soldiers were charging into houses any way they could- and proceeding to slaughter the inhabitants. The Muggles who woke up were soon struck down.

One man jumped up as a Marauder came through his window and raised his arm- just in time to get it sliced off. He screamed, and then the Marauder put his blade into his head through the roof of his mouth, gore going everywhere from the holes in his body.

A woman, trying to find the source of the commotion at her door, opened it in time to see the Purger outside let loose with his Skull-Master. She burst into flames as the hellish stream touched her. She screamed in agony before being extinguished to ashes.

An old couple, running down the stairs, died together as a Marauder let loose with a spell and swung his sword, causing a purple dust to fill the air in an arc. The dust shattered everything it touched, including the old man's neck and the old woman's skull.

One particularly brave police officer took his shotgun and ran towards a scream he had heard. He raised it to fire at an Earth Elementalist who was passing nearby- the woman who he had just impaled on a spear of stone was behind him. The elementalist raised his staff and spoke a single word- and the man petrified instantly. A moment later he shattered by brutal kick from the same Elementalist.

Some distance away, a Fire Elementalist raised his staff and arms and began to chant. Soon, the sky was raining flaming meteors down upon the populace. Screams rang out of a nearby hospital as a meteor hit it, blowing out the entire third floor. The building soon fell in upon itself, crumpling floor by floor. Purgers were cheering at the female fire elementalist as she continued the spell. Some even gave some cat-calls.

An Eclipse cast a spell on the hospital and soon the screams from her Madness spell were heard. Those not insane in the hospital became so and had the distinctive feeling of hunger for human flesh, a small addition to the spell that the Eclipse added to the spell.

A Kraken watched as the chaos beasts that he controlled became the thing that the person they were about to devour feared most. The things were creating more of themselves by draining their victims. He had to make sure that the victim died before changing to help keep control of them.

And on Privet Drive, Seamus walked onto the lawn of the Dursley's.

Inside, the Dursley's had been awoken by the laughter and were cursing.

"What the hell was that?" Mr. Dursley screamed, his mustache twitching.

Mrs. Dursley looked around, and saw Seamus outside. She screamed, as people are wont to do when black-armored, sword-bearing soldiers appear on their doorsteps.

Mr. Dursley rushed for his wife and reached her just as Seamus cast his spell and the door exploded inward. Mr. Dursley, who thanks to restrictive British laws and policies on guns did not own one (COULD not own one), had nothing to strike him with. Were the laws different, things may have turned out better- even magical armor has trouble repelling bullets, and wizards die as easily as humans. But this is how things went.

Seamus stepped inside and looked around. Dudley had just walked to the bottom of the stairs, and the muscular boy was quite obviously scared shitless.

[This is them,] Seamus thought.

He looked at Mr. and Mrs. Dursley, and said, "Are you the Dursley family?"

They nodded. Mr. Dursley began, "If this is something to do with Potter.."

Seamus laughed at this, completely unnerving Mr. Dursley. "Oh, I assure you that Harry has everything to do with this," he said, still chuckling slightly. "But I doubt you have any idea HOW he has to do with this."

Still chuckling, he raised his sword, said a word, and swung it at them. A red dust seemed to settle on the senior Dursleys.

When it touched them, they suddenly feel unconscious. Dudley the only one still conscious shrieked, and (coherent thought gone for the moment), charged Seamus. Seamus waved his sword, spoke

"Immobilius Aegis!" contemptibly, and Dudley stopped dead, frozen in time. He could only watch and hear.

And hear he did, for laughter suddenly poured into the house. It went on for several minutes, until the house itself seemed to be laughing, pouring in the windows and the frame where the door used to stand.

Harry stepped in, as the Jester. He stepped onto the Vernon, and reached down to dip his claws into his back and spine.

"Oh yes," he said, sounding quite cheerful, "I always dreamed of seeing them helpless. And now that it's happened, it's just as sweet as I imagined it." Turning to Seamus, he added, "Damn good work, Seamus. Now, go help Spithe- some police have holed up in the station and are shooting at him and his men. Round up some Elementalists and take them down. Maybe get Luna to destroy it. The Kraken are having a little trouble controlling their chaos beasts so put a few down"

Seamus nodded, said "Sir," and left.

Harry turned once more to Dudley, who was so scared now that he almost passed out- but the spell on him prevented that. As it was, it would have been a blessing.

"Dudley," Harry began, "do you remember all those times you would torture me? You made my life a living hell. And now, I want to return the favor." He leaned over into Dudley's face, staring him in his fear-widened eyes. Dudley stared back at the hellish mask before him and felt his sanity leaving him.

"You made a game of it, you know," Harry said, whispering now. "I remember once when you used a needle and kept stabbing me with it. You said you'd sew my mouth shut if I ever said anything." From behind his back, Harry pulled out a needle. "I'm not going to sew your mouth shut- it's not enough to pay you back in any way- but I am going to sew you up..."

Harry laughed, and in his mind, Dudley screamed.

A month later...

Several weeks of partying went on afterward, the Black Tide had not lost a single soldier, and Privet Drive (plus about ten miles of surrounding area) was a wasteland of ash and craters. Better yet, the Ministry response wasn't to go after the Tide, but to try and Memory Charm every single person who left the attack zone! Dumbledore was calling for finding and attacking the Tide, but the Ministry was still inclined to ignore him. The Prophet was wondering who the attackers were, and theorized it was Death Eaters. This gave Harry quite a kick, so much that he had it posted in the Meeting Hall. The Black Tide was ecstatic over its first victory, and they had every right to celebrate. Seamus, in particular, seemed happy over the battle. Every night he could be found, drinking the firewhisky that had been bought at Diagon Alley, Harry's and the others fortunes had been a wonderful asset to the Tide, in the bar they had built. The Black Tide's Headquarters in the Dark Forest had even been named by Seamus- Oceania. Harry had made it official- after all, what name was better for a Tide?

And even better, Ginny was back. She had finished her training as a Necromancer, and now she had returned. Around her neck, with a gold chain going through its eyes, was the skull of Arthur Weasley. Although physically she was the same (minus the leather wings on her back), she radiated an aura of physical coldness and death. Luna, Tracey, and Draco took after her and did similar with the skulls of their parents.

All this pleased Harry. But what pleased him best was what he had done to the Dursley's.

Dudley was kept in a laboratory, underneath the new building that had been built for Cho Chang's Enchanters that only Harry, Cho, and the best Enchanters could enter. Inside was a large room, with chains coming out of the walls. In the middle was Dudley- or what he had become, at any rate.

Vernon was kept with Tracey and her students for special treatment till the bodies were ready.

Harry had kept his promise to sew Dudley up. He had, in fact, created an entirely new body for Dudley, using an enchanted needle of bone and string made from the sinews of a dragon. The arms, torso, and legs were those of a giant that had been found in the Dark Forest (Harry didn't know it, but it was Hagrid's giant half-

brother, Grawp, he had killed to get these parts.) Onto one shoulder of the giant's body, Harry had sown on the mouth of an Earth-biter- one of the great, toothed wyrms that live in the hills of Ireland. This mouth moved constantly, snapping and snarling, venom dripping out in long drools. Onto the back, he had sown a dragon's head- the white, snarling head breathed icy cold air that could freeze a man's blood solid. A manticore paw- long claws twitching- had been sown onto the right side of the monstrosity. One giant fist held an enormous ball and chains. The right fist held an enormous meat cleaver.

Dudley's head had been removed- with Harry's magic keeping him alive during the process- and sown onto this horrific body. Dudley's mind still existed- but it didn't control this new body. He could do not but watch and feel.

Harry created a new mind to actually run this creature, with Ginny's help. Calling forth an elemental of pain and giving it a host, the body gained movement.

Harry named him, "Whipstitch."

He had also made two other bodies made from mainly mindless creatures instead of a body like Dudley's. They had no left arm but had large chains with hooks and a great battering ram-like ball. He then gave them the heads of Vernon and Petunia and small drakes and a manticore's tail, wings and paw. He then named them the Chimera Unit.

Albus Dumbledore sat in his favorite chair at Hogwarts (which was mostly empty, save for a few teachers still around), and wondered what went wrong. The-Boy-Who-Lived... was now the Jester of Madness.

He shook his head. What had gone wrong? He remembered the prophecy, the one that Professor Trelawney had delivered to him, that night so long ago- was it meaningless now? How could Harry Potter destroy Voldemort- when Harry himself was just as evil now?

Dumbledore shook his head. The only thing to think was that maybe Trelawney had been wrong. He'd have to hang his hopes on that. He could have chosen to think that Neville Longbottom was the boy

in the prophecy, but that was no good either. Neville was one of his commanders now.

Dumbledore heard someone talking below him. That in and of itself put him on his guard- everything did nowadays- but it was just Trelawney.

[Speak of the Devil,] he thought to himself. Aloud he said, "Come in, Prof. Trelawney!"

Trelawney entered, and instead of attempting a mystical voice (which privately annoyed Dumbledore) she said flatly, "He's moving."

"He who?" Dumbledore said, attempting to be cheerful, but he had a feeling that only two beings rated a "he" in the wizarding world- Voldemort to all, and Harry to those few who knew the truth.

"Harry Potter," she said. "He's coming to take Hogwarts down. Every bit of it. He'll tear it apart, stone by stone. And he'll use the spare parts to build his own castle- the Jester's Keep."

"Did you foresee this?" Dumbledore said, alarm rising in his mind. He knew that Harry Potter was not a joke, and Trelawney wouldn't lie about this.

"Yes." she stated simply. Then she screamed.

"What?" Dumbledore said, running to her side.

"He's here," she whispered.

And both of them heard the laughter, rolling out in the light of day, that seemed to suck the heat right out of the room.

Harry had tried to think of everything that could attack Oceania, and other than rampaging bands of centaurs (and, of course, Aragog's hordes of spider children- but that was a separate matter entirely), he could only think of one thing-

Hogwarts and Albus Dumbledore.

He had brooded on how to get rid of them, when Neville Longbottom told him of the hidden way in through the moat. Harry had been very pleased at this news- he had been as happy as a hog in shit, as the saying goes.

But he waited.

He had to, Dumbledore was a infamously tough cookie, and Harry had few intentions of striking Hogwarts with a rookie army that couldn't tell its pants from its shirt. They needed a little real world combat experience first.

He wasn't going to think of Privet Drive- as he thought of the battle they had fought- as any kind of real battle, but it worked as a training exercise.

The battle had done many things, mostly working out the first battle jitters every green soldier gets. Now that that was over, he saw men parading with little jester hat insignia's on their shoulder plates- indicating how many they had killed.

Quite amusing, really.

Now came the real battle.

Harry stood up from his throne, and called Seamus Finnigan. When he arrived, Harry spoke two words, which Seamus would forever remember as the words that sealed his fate and made the dark bud inside him, one that had been growing ever since the battle- no the slaughter- at Privet Drive, one that enjoyed the killing and had been nurtured by the alcohol, bloom into an obsidian rose with all of it's crimson thorns-

"It's time."

Inside the tent that served as Harry's Headquarters- at least until the Jester's Keep was finished, anyway- several objects- mostly maps and parchments- were cluttered around. Two of these were maps of the Dark Forest- one of from previous Ministry surveys, another much more detailed Dark Forest map that had been made by Black Tide scouts. A long table in the middle now held a third map that showed a hand drawing of Hogwarts that included the hidden

entrance. The plans Harry, Seamus, and Neville had been working on this past week were laid out upon this table alongside it.

Seamus looked at the map, then looked up. "Harry, to put it bluntly, this still doesn't seem like a good plan to me."

Harry nodded. Seamus had become a good strategist, and he was listening to him. "What are the weak points? What do you see?"

Seamus pointed down at the map. "Let me run the whole thing through, and then I'll show you the bad spots." When Harry nodded, he continued. "That Whipstitch thing, the Chimeras, The Eclipse, a few of the Kraken, a company of Marauders and Purgers attack the front gate, with Ginny leading- they work as the distraction. Good. My men, which is compose the rest of the Kraken, the rest of the Purgers, the remaining Marauders and I take the hidden entrance with me in command. The entrance is under the water, but Neville and his Elementalists will cast spells on us so we can breathe and the equipment doesn't get wet- no problem there. They will then split and support Ginny or support me. My men and I enter the entrance and its tunnel, and we kill anything in our way while we go through Hogwarts- also good. But here's where the shit hits the fan- we have to get to Dumbledore's room and kill him. No offense, but damn unlikely- you know how powerful he is. Even if I had that Whipstitch thing and the Chimeras you made fighting too, it'd be a hell of a lucky break to wound Dumbledore, much less kill him."

Harry nodded. He'd figured the answer to that one out himself. "I thought as much. I'm going with you."

Seamus raised an eyebrow. "Really? That wasn't in the original plan but are you certain you can take Dumbledore out?"

Harry grinned at him, and Seamus (managing to hold onto his courage) looked back, his feet blocks of ice and his heart hammering. Harry could smell his fear, but he was holding his ground- mightier men would have backed away. He had a lot of guts, that one. Harry liked that in him. Harry gave him a break and looked at the map and Seamus was visibly relieved.

"Yes, with you and your men behind me, I'm sure I can kill Dumbledore," he said. "The only other change- Ginny isn't leading

the main gate charge. Cho Chang is. Ginny is coming with us- she has a special job inside the castle we discussed last night."

Seamus nodded. Harry waved his hand across his face, and instantly the Jester was in his place.

"Let us go," Harry said, behind his hellish mask.

They walked off, and the plans on the table flapped slightly as wind from the flap in the tent pushed it, and then all was still.

Dumbledore's thoughts were very troubled, so he did not register the slight shaking in the ground until he heard quick, rapid steps up the stairs.

"Dumbledore!" Prof. McGonagall cried, out of breath from running. "The Black Tide! It's here! And at the front gate!"

Dumbledore jumped out of his reverie and began dressing quickly. From the corner of the room, he summoned his wand with "Accio Wand!" and was about to run down the stairs when an enormous BOOM, BOOM, BOOM reverberated throughout the entire building. From the front came the sound of some creatures screaming in pain- sounded like a human boy, man and woman. Behind it was the roar of some monstrous thing.

"Harry, what have you done?" Dumbledore whispered to himself as he followed McGonagall down the stairs.

Outside, Whipstitch and The Chimera were pounding the ancient door into sawdust with their ball and chains. The weapons-enchanted with runes that glowed bright blue on the black ball and chain- hammered into the door, and at each blow, it began to give a little. Cho Chang, who was riding the hellish monstrosity that was Whipstitch shoulder, was laughing as she ordered it to attack.

"Again!" she cried to it. On it's body, near the other shoulder, Dudley's face screamed as the horror- the absolute horror- of what he was now a part of drove his sanity from him. The demon spirit that had possessed the body (with Ginny's help) roared its battle cry. The dragon's head and the Earthbiter's jaw beneath Cho let out their own cries. Behind it, the company of Eclipse, Kraken, Marauders and Purgers raised their weapons and began chanting. The Kraken

had brought out some Ethereal Marauders. They were large lizard like beings with no head. They had three eyes that lined a massive maw that was shaped like a triangle when open. They also had large black mandibles around the corners of their mouths. (again from DND)

"AGAIN! AGAIN! AGAIN!" they cried, eagerly anticipating this battle.

Before the fight inside the castle began, a fight outside it was about to start.

Hagrid- a bit black and blue from his dealings with the giants and trying to teach his brother Grawp (who was now quite dead) was standing with his crossbow in one hand and Fang beside him. His face was twisted in black rage. Behind him, centaurs marched out, their hooves beating time on the ground.

Hagrid had recognized Grawp's form, and although he didn't know how, he knew that they had used his brother in Necromancy, an art so dark even Voldemort would barely use it.

"The bastards," he whispered, and then to the centaurs he cried, "NOW! Charge now! Kill them all!"

Meanwhile, in the moat, an army at least four times the size of the one at the gate was swimming towards the hidden entrance of Hogwarts. Neville, in the form of a giant squid, was guiding them. The moat's own giant squid acknowledged him with a flick of tentacle, and then was gone. Soon, this odd company found a hole inside the moat's rim, covered by a decorated door. Neville opened this door with a tentacle, and the army went in, silent as death's gliding wings. In the front, a grin spreading on his face, Seamus Finnigan- who in later months would be called the "Black General" by his enemies- swam forward, whispering two words to him self but that echoed through the water to his men:

"It's time."

Hagrid's army would have had the element of surprise had a Purger not saw them and screamed out loud:

"Centaur! They've brought CENTAURS!"

The entire army turned about. Soon, the field in front was a wall of flame as the Purgers opened up their Skull-Masters. Many centaurs, unable to stop their forward momentum, were burned alive by the flames- those that tried to stop were thrown forward by their onrushing brethren.

Some slid through the sheet of death and rushed forward. Although the Black Tide had no spears to use against them, they had a very talented Earth Elementalist among them named Padma Patil. She had raised her staff when she saw them, and then hammered it down. Instantaneously, hundreds of rocky spires erupted from the ground, and what centaurs dodged the fire were impaled on the spears. Despite these defenses, a few centaurs got through, and they were soon killed by sword, maw, and spell- but not without the Black Tide taking a few losses.

Hagrid himself turned out to be the biggest problem. He was shooting and reloading his crossbow very quickly, and the spells the Black Tide threw at him simply bounced off his giant skin, they didn't want to risk close-quarters battle with the enraged half-giant, the Eclipse were busy dealing with the ward protecting the castle so they couldn't destroy him and the Kraken knew he knew how to deal with the Ethereal Marauders. The only spell to get through was Padma's- she had launched a gravity-enhancing spell that slowed him down for a while.

It wasn't long- maybe 15 seconds- but it was enough time for Cho to guide Whipstitch to Hagrid.

"Thought you'd like to see your big brother!" Cho taunted, laughing from her position atop the monstrosity. "He's soooo glad to see you!"

Hagrid snapped, and the weak hold Padma's spell had on him slipped off like a coat slips off a person who doesn't have their arms through the sleeves and are running.

"I'LL KILL YOU!" he shrieked- right before he was struck by the ball and chain. He was knocked down, and Fang ran up to help, only to get his face melted off when the Earth-biter mouth spat it's acidic drool on him. He died quickly, as his brain fried and vital circuits disconnected.

Hagrid struggled up- the blow had been fierce, and he hadn't been in that great of shape to start with- and was on his knees when the dragon head turned to him and spat a wave of freezing ice on him. He was instantly frozen to the ground, and the manticore paw struck his hand, tearing the crossbow from it. He howled in pain, struggling against the thick ice on his feet.

A second later, the giant meat cleaver in Whipstitch's hand cut him in half, and his struggling ceased.

Cho's voice filled the air with laughter. Maddening laughter soon followed after it.

Inside the castle, the soldiers found themselves outside the Slytherin house. Running down the corridors, they killed all in their way, with Harry and Seamus heading straight for Dumbledore while Ginny, Spithe, Terry, Vicks and Draco were killing the teachers, their men right behind them. Those in the tapestries in the halls rung out with screams as battles were joined in front of them. They were soon silenced by Purgers.

Trelawney screamed as a Marauder struck her with a spell, paralyzing her. Her mind's eye closed when he drove his sword into it, right between the eyes. Her last thought was [the prophecy was it wrong...]

Mrs. Sprout, who had been using the school as a temporary home, was burned alive by a Purger who broke her door down with one good kick. She couldn't scream- the sudden fire had sucked in all the air in the room. Her four-post bed burned around her as she died, twisting in pain as her limbs melted in the heat. The ethereal Marauders were taking apart the castle already.

Nearby, Ginny was performing a strange rite on Peeves, with her two students beside her. These two would become Necromancers as well, and she was going to use the ghost's energy to create a bone charm that would empower them. She needed none; her father's dead skull had all the power she needed.

Peeves' shrieks rang out as his very essence was ripped into and torn apart. Soon he disappeared like smoke in the wind- and a small, skull shaped charm hit the ground below where he had been. Ginny

smiled, then hurried off, her student's running behind her winged back. After all, there were other ghosts to catch, and time was short.

Dumbledore and McGonagall were standing at the entrance to the Headmaster's Office when Seamus and Harry burst in. Glancing at McGonagall, Harry yelled, "Kill her!" to Seamus, and then ran towards Dumbledore, claws flashing in the air like ten sparkles from death.

Seamus and McGonagall faced each other, and she quickly cast a Transfiguration spell on herself and transformed into a great, saber-toothed cat right in front of Seamus. He steadied his sword, and prepared to face her charge. She leaped straight at him, her fangs flashing- and then they were painted crimson, as Seamus had dropped to one knee and shoved his sword into her face, her momentum driving it into her upper jaw and brain, killing her instantly but not without injury to himself as her fang came down on his arm. he didn't scream but tried to pry her from his arm to help Harry.

Dumbledore and Harry fought up the stairs nearby, Harry slashing while Dumbledore fought back with his spells. Eventually, they reached the platform's top. Nearby lay the entrance to the Headmaster's office.

"Run on inside," Harry said, folding his arms to his chest in the death pose, claws gleaming dully. "Run inside to die, like a coward."

"No," Dumbledore said. "I do not run. I will trust Fate as I always have."

Harry laughed at this. Even Dumbledore was slightly scared of his laughter. It was beyond what any mortal could understand.

"Oh yes, hide behind everyone's favorite whipping boy," he snarled, his voice tinged with anger. "Fate that decides so much, did you ever think that maybe there IS no Fate? That maybe we create our own fates- that we are our own masters? No, you didn't. And that, Dumbledore, is where you failed. You never hunted Voldemort- why? Because you believed that Fate, through me, would kill him. You never thought that maybe I wasn't the White Knight. You never really stepped in to help me in the worst times, and you left me at

the Dursley house! DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'VE DONE TO ME OR ANYONE ELSE YOU ABANDONED TO FATE?"

With these words, Harry snapped. He flew in a rage across the room, but even in his anger he didn't forget Dumbledore's power. As Dumbledore summoned a spell that would rip Harry's body apart, Harry leaped and struck with his own magic, a lightning spell. Lightning was notoriously hard to control, and even the most skilled mages had trouble with it. Many sought to command it, however—because all forms of magic and enchantment were shattered by a single stroke of lightning. The lightning burst into Dumbledore and fried the protective enchantments on his robes. His spell fell apart as he suffered the bolt's power.

Harry's leap took him to right above Dumbledore. He crossed his arms and struck quickly in a scissoring motion. Dumbledore's right arm, wand still clutched within, fell off with a sickening splat onto the ground and claw marks adorn his face. Dumbledore gritted his teeth and used his left hand to hit Harry with a spell that threw him against the far wall. Harry hit it and gasped for breath. Meanwhile, Dumbledore grabbed his severed arm with his left and put the two ends together. Chanting, he healed his wound and then turned to face Harry once more his face still bleeding from the claw marks and his right arm to be useless after this battle.

Harry leaped up just as Dumbledore fired a hurricane at him. Running along the walls too quickly for Dumbledore to track, Harry slashed the air and repeatedly cast a spell that turned them to bolts of energy. These slashes appeared as green fire and descended towards Dumbledore, who blocked them with his own spells.

Harry leaped off the wall and stood facing Dumbledore, both panting with exertion. Harry smiled under his mask.

"For an old man, you're pretty strong," he said, his grin spreading. "But only magically, not physically..."

Harry stood before Dumbledore and took his mask off. And Dumbledore could not draw breath as he gazed at what lay within.

Inside Harry's mask, he did not see anything at first only blackness. Soon it was a view that looked like outer space. But then he started seeing faces. Faces screaming in torment, faces screaming in

laughter, faces that were joined by bodies, and then they were drifting towards him, reaching out to him with dead hands-

Dumbledore's heart, old and weary with exertion, stopped beating, and he died almost instantly. When his body hit the floor, his eyes were leaking blood as was his nose and his mouth.

Harry's maddening laughter rang out over the slaughter of Hogwarts.

Marauders are the basic soldier and terror squad. Their leader is Seamus who only takes orders from Harry or Blaise depending on the situation.

Purgers are those with Skull-masters. Their leader is Terry Boot who helps make the Skull-masters and is part of the Enchanters Guild. Terry follows Harry and then Seamus' orders.

Elementalist is those that control the elements. Some Purgers are part of the Fire Elementalists but instead of staffs they use their Skull-masters as ways to cast spells. All of the Eclipse is in some part of it. Some Krakens are part of it but not many. Neville is the commander of the Elementalist. He takes orders from Harry and sometimes Seamus.

Enchanters are those that make the weapons. Some battle with other groups but most don't. Leader is Cho Chang. They follow Harry's orders.

The Eclipse is the demolition experts. Their leader is Luna who follows Harry's orders then Seamus'. She is also part of the more destructive side of the Enchanters Guild.

The Kraken is the beast tamers. Their leader is Draco who follows Harry's orders then Seamus'.

The Sword fish are the assassins. Their leader is Blaise then Daphne. Both of who only take orders from Harry.

The Great White is the interrogation, slavery, and torture organization and is composed mainly of fear-casters. Their leader is Blaise and then Tracey. Both only take orders from Harry.

Chimera is living experiments that are used in battle. Whipstitch is the official leader but is commanded by Cho Chang so she is in command of this unit. She takes orders from Harry and then Seamus.

"English"

"French"

Chapter 4

First Encounter

Harry stood on a hill in Oceania, a tall hill that was much higher than the surrounding forest. A month had passed since Hogwarts fell. Since then, their numbers had grown incredibly. Those students who had originally not cared about either group had suddenly shifted to one of the two alliances. Some of the parents had joined as well. The Tide had grown to almost five thousand people. Its banner- a black wave, curled and foaming at the top with tentacles coming from it and a moon blocking out sun above it- flew from pennants all around the city of Oceania.

The sounds of chopping and cutting were going on all around, with the occasional tree falling with a solid "whump". The Chimera Unit, which had also grown, was constantly moving the trees or cutting them down. Harry's army was busy chopping down the Dark Forest tree by tree, clearing enough space to build a city. Harry planned on this being the site of his castle, the Jester's Keep. He gazed down now, looking at his workers. Already a lot of space had been cleared, but Harry wanted as much forest gone as possible. Keeping trees near a fortress was a great way to let spies watch you at will in their leaves, and Harry wasn't a fool. A jester yes but a fool was not what he was.

Wearing the black bands of the Tide on their forearms, the workers moved in the heat of the summer. Fall was coming soon, though, and an occasional chill breeze would blow through, reminding them to work quickly. They needed something far more permanent than tents when winter rolled around, and they set as strong a pace as they could. Every one of them had either a staff or an axe. Those with axes, which were enchanted to help them cut into anything whether that be it a head or wood, were chopping the trees down; those with staves were either casting spells to chop them down, or using a levitation spell to lift them and move them to another group of workers. These were casting spells to split the wood into usable planks and boards. Already several buildings had already been

erected, and more were under construction. The buildings weren't homes, however. Those would be built later.

What buildings had already been made were what Harry deemed the most vital to the military. Two were watchtowers, and at the top of these wooden constructs two Marauders, a Purger, and an Elementalist stood guard. The towers were built on opposite sides of a road that Harry was planning on building in the winter. A gate would be erected between them soon enough. Each Marauder had a bow and arrow with them, and all were good shots. The Purgers were the best at aiming their Skull-masters even with kick-back that they caused. The Elementalist in each tower was equipped with staves. Padma stood watch in one, her Earth magics ready to wreck havoc on anything that approached. So far they had been busy; scattered groups of centaurs had attacked, and twice Aragog's children had rushed them. They'd lost a few men in the last battle with the spider beasts.

The reason for Aragog's attacks was inside a strange, dome-shaped building that lay almost in the exact center of Oceania. Immediately inside the front door one was greeted with three windows. Looking straight ahead, the first thing one saw was a glass-enclosed room containing a bloated brood queen, a member of Aragog's race. Another room contained her much smaller mate, and in the third, pale eggs pulsed slowly. Aragog's race of giant spiders was different from most species; most of its members were neither male nor female. They were sterile, which kept the race from overproducing and eating itself to death. Aragog was one of only three males in all the Dark Forest. Females were just as rare, and capturing these two had been one of the greatest triumphs of the Tide. Seamus himself had led the small army that had captured these two. A special set of runes that Cho Chang had personally drawn on the bloated egg-sac of the brood mother resulted in spider children that obeyed the commands of anyone wearing the matching rune-set, which Harry ordered carved on the armor of every member of the Tide. The first batch of spider servants was to be born the next spring. Harry couldn't wait for it.

Another building, the oldest one in Oceania (it had been built two months before, when Harry had been creating Whipstitch) was the Enchanters' Guild. Inside were housed the black smithy and various tools for carving, drawing, and weaving the enchantments that were ordered by the Black Tide. Cho lived here, in a small tower above

the two story building. They along with some Necromancers made the Chimera units. Cho also helped Terry build Skull-Masters. Smoke was always pouring out from its chimney, and heat rolled off of it like water from a lake.

The last building here was the largest of them, easily three stories tall and spread out wide. Made of wood and some stone (scavenged from Hogwarts), the building was a combination barracks, supply depot, bar, and butcher shop. Dubbed simply "The Barracks," animals (hunted in from the Forest) were brought here and made into edible meals. Various supplies were stored here as well, as well as the bar (called the Laughing Mug) that Seamus frequented. A vault was contained within as well, guarding the treasures that the Tide had won. Four loyal guards protected this safe, deep within the Barracks.

Several small houses were beginning to go up, and above it all sat the foundations of the Jester's Keep. Harry's fortress wouldn't be completed for at least another half a year to two years, if they ran into trouble but that was okay.

He had time. He had all the time in the world.

Hermione looked up into the night air. Cold... it was so cold at Durmstrang. No matter what time of year, Durmstrang was nothing but ice and frost and the biting wind. She shivered and bunched up her shoulders for protection.

[Still,] she thought, looking on the bright side, [Harry and the Tide are far away from here.]

And that was true. Harry's Black Tide was too far away to hurt them at Durmstrang. And here, she had Ron. She didn't do much in public with him, since Viktor might turn them out if he thought Hermione didn't like him, but in private...

She smiled, thinking of him. She was starting to fall in love with him, and even though she thought it was bad timing on her part, she felt the way she felt. But thinking of him also made her sad. Ron had aged a lot in the past few days, matured and grown sadder, more adult. They all had, really. Ron had learned of his father's death from the Daily Prophet and his mother, and they all knew who had done it. Not Voldemort.

Harry.

Ron's tears had flowed when he saw the paper. He had went to his room and cried, his hand held to his eyes. Hermione had put her arms around him to comfort him, and his tears eventually trickled to a stop. Replacing them was rage.

"Damn him!" he swore fiercely, whispering as Hermione held him. "Damn him! Why? How could you, Harry? We were friends..."

His fist had clenched and unclenched constantly. His hatred of Harry became almost an obsession. He had taken up sword training, and every day could be seen practicing his thrusts and counters. He meant to pierce Harry's heart with his sword.

Hermione herself had begun learning even more magic, skipping things like Arithmancy to learn more Defense against the Dark Arts spells. She had been training the White Shore (now consisting of five thousand members- neither Harry nor Hermione knew it, but they were now opposing commanders of equal forces) and she had also begun taking command classes at Durmstrang. The heads of Durmstrang had believed her, and with Fudge's death had withdrawn from the wider wizarding world. The resistance to Harry had to start here. They would have to face off, and soon.

Hermione shivered again. The wind was cold. And on it, she could smell blood coming from the south west. They had only one unit for their soldiers, It was currently lead by Hermione and Ron and it was simple the Sand. They were the warrior of the White Shore.

Months Later and miles away.

Ron stood up from his seat on a log by a fire. The soldiers of the White Shore, their silver armor glinting in the light of the fire, gathered about him. Those sitting down looked at him when he cleared his throat. He had become their leader, and when he spoke they listened.

"Men," Ron began, his voice taking a tone with authority behind it, "tomorrow we meet the Tide. It's been a hard journey back to England. We have tried to alert the Ministry, but they will not listen. They refuse to aid us." Mumbled grumblings and complaints among

the crowd at this. The Ministry's rejection had stung them badly. "But we do not stand alone. Durmstrang stands with us." Hearty cheer, the men had wintered at Durmstrang, and despite the bitter cold had enjoyed the chance to practice and train. They needed all they could of both to defeat the Tide.

"Durmstrang's spies have recently found Harry moving further south. He is heading towards France. He plans on taking over Beauxbatons and forcibly impressing the students there into his army. We have to stop him."

Ron pulled out his broadsword from its scabbard. It made a slight hiss as metal rubbed metal, and when it was free Ron used it to draw a map in the air with his magic. The map showed France and the surrounding area.

"Madame Maxine has divulged the location of Beauxbatons to us," Ron continued, and on the map a glowing blue dot appeared near the northern area of France, next to the French Alps. "And we are now moving to defend it. We are here," another glowing dot, white in color, appeared about five miles west of Beauxbatons, "and Harry's army is here." A third dot, black in color and glowing ominously, appeared north of Beauxbatons. It was about 10 miles north of the school.

From the crowd around him, a soldier asked, "If Beauxbatons' location is secret, then how does Harry know where to go?"

Ron shook his head. "That's the bad part. Harry had a spy in Beauxbatons, a girl he met in the Triwizard Tournament. Over the Christmas break she went back to Hogwarts to see how her fellow champion was doing. We aren't for sure what happened, but from the girl's diary, found in her room at Beauxbatons after she fled a week ago, we can guess. Apparently, an honor guard of Black Tide members greeted her at the rubble where Hogwarts once stood. She was taken through the Black Forest into Harry's main camp, which he is calling Oceania. There, she and Harry had a discussion that led to her being inducted into the Tide."

"Her name is Fleur Delacour. She revealed the location of Beauxbatons to Harry, and in doing so gave Harry the lives of everyone in Beauxbatons on a silver platter."

Shaking his head, Ron finished. "We will fight him here," he said, and a fourth and final dot appeared on the map just north of the school. "We make our stand here, and hopefully it's the last one we must make."

The men shivered as they looked at the map. The dot glowed red in the night. It pulsed slowly, as if in contemplation of something.

It was death, waiting. And the question on their minds was, for whom?

The Tide, or them?

Harry's army got up before dawn and began packing. Most of the troops complained about the conditions. Travel through the French Alps, even for wizards, was unpleasant business. The wind was bitingly sharp, even in spring which they were in. Snow, remnants of the winter just past, clung to the peaks and made travel difficult.

Harry woke up before dawn as well. He lay in his sleeping bag of fur, and he thought. He had waited all winter, building his strength, for this chance. It was now spring, and it was time for him to make his move. The camp was the last before the battle. He would need a queen soon. He thought over the members of his Ebony Flame. After all he needed someone just as insane as him.

The thought sparked Harry's laughter, and it echoed in the mountain. The Ebony Flame woke up at the sound, being the most sensitive to it, and seeing that it was time to travel, got out of their bags. After packing they moved over to Harry, Blaise was the first to arrive.

"When does it start?" she asked, her voice barely containing her excitement. Harry could hear the undertone of desire that flowed below it. He smiled. She wanted this battle too.

"Soon," he whispered back "Very soon."

Soon was right. The battle happened at 12:00 p.m. that day, Noon, a proper time for a showdown between the two armies.

Hermione and Ron, having planned their defense of Beauxbatons by looking at past wizard battles, were waiting in an open field, swords,

wands, and staves out. They were planning on meeting what they felt would be a blind charge by Harry.

Unfortunately for them, Harry had other plans. Harry, who had never actually studied wizard history, looked to Muggle warfare for advice. And in this, at least, the Muggles were the geniuses and the wizards were the fools.

There have been two recorded wizard "wars" that have raged across the world. Both were in ancient times. Both were also classic examples of bad leadership. Warfare was never quite developed by wizards, who tended to solve matters with one-on-one duels. Even the war against Voldemort was more of a guerilla style battle than real open warfare.

Muggles, on the other hand, have fought with each other for centuries on end at some times. They learned how to fight and wage war on levels that wizards weren't even close to, nor would be for many years if the progress had stodied like that. This is why Ron and Hermione expected a full-out charge in an open field. They thought Harry would throw all his forces at them. They readied an impressive defence of their front, but failed to do so well on the sides and rear. This mistake would soon be their undoing.

Seamus, who Harry had chosen as a general, earned his nickname "The Black General" in this battle. Having studied Muggle Warfare under Harry's orders, he had struck on a brilliant idea. He split the army in four pieces, one led by him, and two others by Spithe and Vicks. His unit would wait while Spithe led the smallest unit to attack the front. At this point, his army would attack from the west side, and at the same time Vicks would engage the enemy on the east side. The resulting pincer would trap the enemy in crossfire. To keep anyone from leaving the south end, the last division, which was led by Cho and consisted almost entirely of Purgers, would then open fire on the bottleneck this created, burning any White Shore soldiers who tried to escape. The Ebony Flame was divided mostly in the three units. Blaise, Luna, Harry and Neville were with Spithe, well Draco, and Terry with Seamus, and The Chimera squad, except Whipstitch, with Vick. Ginny would be flying around during the battle.

Vicks and Seamus led off their portions while Harry stayed with Spithe. He wanted to attack from the front. He became the Jester, and then surveyed the battlefield. In the distance he could hear the

sounds of an army approaching. Ginny landed beside him, her light feet pattering on the ground as her wings eased her down. She looked at him when he turned and said, "It's going to be a slaughter."

"I so hope so," Harry said. He soon started his maniacal, insane, and maddening laughter.

Ginny smiled and took to the air. Far away, she heard horns blowing. The battle was beginning. She soon joined him in his laughter.

Few soldiers of the White Shore escaped that day. It is regarded in wizard history as the moment that Harry revealed himself to the world, and also eliminated the threat of the White Shore for a while. It wasn't the end of the White Shore, but it was close.

Harry's frontal assault was greeted with a hail of spells and arrows. The Marauders lifted their shields, shrieked their war cries, and struck back. Harry and the Ebony flame with him was in the middle of it all, claws, weapons, and spells flashing in the sun as he struck his foes. His companion the whole while Blaise, striking at the enemies he couldn't reach, and protecting his back as he did hers. In later battles they would be named the "Madness' Couple" Or the "Jester Nobility". Beside them, a White Shore soldier was suddenly grabbed by the body of his companion; the zombie reached up to the screaming soldier's face and crushed it. In the air above, Ginny watched her new servant and laughed once more. Her high-pitched, girlish laughter rang clear over the battlefield. It sounded like mad or insane laughter to the White Shore soldiers. To the Black Tide it sounded like laughter filled with mirth. Nearly all of the Ebony Flame joined her in her laughter sounding just as mad or insane, just as beyond human as she.

Ron and Hermione, both in the thick of things, noticed that the army wasn't big enough for what they'd guessed his strength at. Both were too preoccupied to worry about it much, though. If they had any idea what was coming next, they would have worried plenty.

You see, the eggs of the brood queen Seamus had captured had hatched. The little spiders inside had grown enormous, almost as big as a horse and much stronger.

Harry had designated a unit of Marauders to ride them. The spiders responded quite ably to this (the runes on the Marauders armor controlling them) and proved better than horses. What horse can climb walls, spin webs, and fight just as hard as its rider or was excellent in tight spaces? Harry called the spider-riding company the "Dusk Knights". The company rode with Seamus, who had mounted one himself. Riding these foul creatures, the Dusk Knights were the first soldiers to strike the western front of the White Shore. The soldiers, fighting Spithe's unit, never looked at them once while the Dusk Knights slaughtered them. On the east side, Vicks led his forces forward with the five members of the Chimera unit walking along with him. And in the south, Cho rode upon Whipstitch's shoulder and urged her troops on.

The battle was horrific. One White Shore soldier, attempting to strike a wounded Marauder, was grabbed by a Dusk Knight's leaping spider. The creature's fangs, dripping venom, ripped into his shoulder and jerked him backwards. His jugular ripped open, the last thing his dying eyes saw was the monster's gaping maw, feeding upon his vital fluids. Another was caught in the jaws of one of the many heads of the fourth 'addition' to the Chimera unit, his limbs were torn to pieces as the many headed Bull-like, in both body and heads except the teeth, beast attacked others with its teeth, by trampling, or horns.

Another soldier was fighting Harry and Blaise when several fallen soldiers about him grabbed his legs. He screamed and hacked at one's face. The zombie, undeterred by the loss of most of his skull, kept his hold. Harry ended the soldier's screams with his claws. Twin claw gashes were carved into the soldier's face and brain. He fell dead, and then rose up to join the fight. Ginny circled above him, a hellish vulture over a nightmare battlefield. Blaise grabbed an arrow out of the air and grabbed a bow from one of the fallen and fired right back. The arrow pierced the head of the original archer and the person behind him.

Ron, who had seen the charging Dusk Knights by a lucky chance of fate, screamed for retreat. He, Hermione, and a small portion of the White Shore army escaped before Cho and her Purgers blocked the way. Those that followed were incinerated in the crimson streams of the Skull-masters. One unlucky soul, attempting to flee, was liquefied by a stream of Whipstitch's acid. Cho, who had taken a liking to Whipstitch and was riding him, laughed as the soldier's

entire face sloughed off. Whipstitch roared from his multiple mouths, and Dudley, completely insane now, screamed with him.

Viktor Krum, who had gone as well, had far less luck than Ron and Hermione. He was attacked by Padma. Viktor threw his spear when he saw her casting a spell. The spear thudded into the ground not a foot from him. Padma had cast a gravity spell on it, drawing it to the ground. Her next spell sent a boulder from the ground streaking at Viktor. His entire body from the waist up was torn off from the force of the blow.

Another soldier attempting to run from the battle was caught by the webbing of a Dusk Knight. The webbing tripped him, and it was all the time the Dusk Knight needed to stab him to death. His mount screeched loudly over the kill, and then rushed forward to the next opponent.

Not that all the casualties were on the White Shore side. Terry Boot, who had had the unfortunately bad luck of being in Ron's way when he was retreating, had been sliced at and gained a bad scar across his face and right side of his body. A soldier besides him wasn't as lucky and had his head and arm cut from him. His body, minus an arm and head, stumbled about for a bit and then fell. Blood pooled all around it, pumped from a still-living heart.

The battle lasted for two hours. At the end of it, Harry was triumphant. He gazed about himself. The only surviving White Shore members had either fled with Ron and Hermione or surrendered. They soon died as well.

Harry looked to Blaise and the rest of the Ebony Flame. Blaise was laughing, and Harry laughed with her. The Ebony Flame soon joined them in their laughter, Ginny even landing briefly to do a short dance before going back to the skies.

"THEY ARE FINISHED!" Harry roared to his army.

"TO BEAUXBATONS!" he continued.

"ONWARD!" Seamus yelled, spurring his spider mount from its latest kill and charging towards the school, now visible in the horizon. The army followed him, the slaughter of the past hours giving them new energy.

In the air above, Ginny smiled. The Dream Nightmare appeared before her again, and as she winged towards Beauxbatons, she heard its voice in her mind.

"And so it begins."

She nodded towards it. "Yes, so it does."

"His will be the soul that damns all in this world."

Ginny heard the Dream Nightmare's laughter ring in the air around her. She joined in its laughter.

In front of her, Beauxbatons was rushing forward, as the future was the future that was Harry Potter's, the future of the Jester of Madness, and the Jester King.

Beauxbatons, the second largest school of magic in Europe, stood at the foothills of the French Alps. The school for almost all southern Europe and the northernmost parts of Africa, Beauxbatons accommodated 8,000 students, a little fewer than 2,000 students less than Hogwarts, which had been the largest school. It resembled Hogwarts to a great extent, but instead of four separate towers, it had only three. This was the Headmaster's Office from which Madame Maxine's owl had been sent three days ago, to the Ministry of Magic, seeking aid. The others were the dormitories for females and males respectively

The Ministry of Magic was still deaf to those who told them that a new force had arisen. With Cornelius Fudge dead, and Albus Dumbledore (who could have convinced them) dead as well, the Ministry was too disorganized and confused to do anything. They didn't even believe the Black Tide existed. They believed that Death Eaters had destroyed Hogwarts. Percy Weasley, and nearly all of the rest of the Weasley clan, after the fall of Beauxbatons joined the White Shore.

Their disbelief would spell the end of Beauxbatons as well. They had sent her owl back with a letter telling her to "calm down" and stop these "ridiculous observations." They particularly disliked the part about Harry Potter leading an army. They all thought it a grand joke.

Madame Maxine looked out her window from one of Beauxbatons towers. Below her, those few teachers who would fight were getting killed. Cho Chang, riding Whipstitch (who she had gained a great fondness for), laughed as the monstrosity cut down another hapless teacher. One teacher was dragged away, kicking and screaming, by a Dusk Knight's spider. Another Dusk Knight rode up, and they tore the hapless man in half. Their mounts feasted upon his intestines as they spilled onto the ground. He was still screaming when they ripped his face off.

Madame Maxine turned from the window. Her room was cluttered heavily, and an observer would be surprised at how much her office and Dumbledore's resembled. Pictures of headmaster's past hung on the walls, and without one exception they were all gloomy. Several were crying.

Madame Maxine looked at her desk. On it was a device she had crafted when she heard that Harry was coming. By the gods, she wished she didn't have to do this. She went over to it and studied it for a moment.

The device sat in the middle of the only clear spot on the desk, which was cluttered with parchments and oddities. The device was a sphere, perfectly round, set into a circular mount. It glowed blue, and the colors inside seemed to roll, like an ocean wave. It was beautiful.

It was also deadly. As were all poisons. The Ministry had outlawed these weapons for years. They were called Shatterstars, and a single one could destroy hundreds of people in single blow. They disrupted the patterns of life and magic when activated, and the range could be from ten feet to ten miles. They made the atom bombs Muggles used look like firecrackers. This one wasn't an actual Shatterstar; she had created it with the help of her teachers, and it wasn't quite as powerful as a real Shatterstar. Still, it was powerful enough for what she needed it to do.

She planned on completely destroying Beauxbatons with it. A single touch, one whispered word, and...

"What are you doing around here?" said a female voice Madame Maxine remembered. She whipped around to look in a corner that had been bare moments ago. Anger lit her giantess face.

"You! I'd haf thought' you would nefer haf shown your face 'ere again, Fleur!" she shouted at the figure before her.

Fleur Delacour stood before her, in the corner of the room. Madame Maxine could only see her face, but that was enough to direct her hatred at, and her magic as well. She raised her wand towards the grinning face in front of her.

Before she could strike, a loud flapping sound filled the room. Her hand suddenly exploded in gore, and before the crimson rush of blood removed it from sight, Madame Maxine saw three objects that looked like steel feathers imbedded in what was left of her hand. They had chopped off most of her fingers, and her wand fell to the floor, in three pieces smoking. Madame Maxine screamed and clutched her wounded hand. In front of her, Fleur stepped out. Madame Maxine's eyes widened in horror as she saw what Fleur had become.

Her face was unchanged, but below that point her body was covered in gray, metallic-looking feathers. Her hands were wicked claws, and two wings sprouted from her back. Her feet were talons. They clicked on the floor as she approached Madame Maxine.

Madame Maxine scrambled backwards, trying to reach the Shatterstar. Fleur's smile never changed as she swept her wings forward, crossing them in front of her. She snapped them back, and now Madame Maxine identified that strange flapping sound. From the flapping wings four feathers, their edges sharper than any sword, shot out and buried themselves in the flesh of her things. Madame Maxine, hamstrung now and bleeding severely, cried out and crumpled to the floor. She ordered her legs to move and felt the message sizzle en route. The connections down there were gone. All she could feel was a cold, invading feeling where the feathers were buried. She whimpered in pain. Fleur stepped in front of her and spoke rapidly in their natural tongue.

"*I've seen the most amazing things,*" she said, lowering her face to Madame Maxine's. The half-giantess' body rocked with pain. "*I've become the most amazing things. This is my heritage, and this school will be my right. You will not take it away from me with your pitiful toy.*" Looking at the Shatterstar on the desk, still glowing serenely as if removed from this blood-soaked scene, she continued, "*It's the world of the Tide now, the world where I can claim my

birthright. Did you know that my grandmother was hunted? That veela are hunted the world over?"* She rose up, and then began pacing the room, shaking her head slowly. Madame Maxine, her life blood leaking out, could do nothing more than watch and listen. "They are enslaved when found. Most of them end up as the sexual "pets" of governors and other high-ranking officials of whatever government manages to find them- or worse, they use them in spells. I've heard that a single veela in good health can fetch prices of thousands of Galleons in some places. A veela sacrifice is highly respected in some circles, and a vital component of some spells."* She stopped pacing and looked directly at the dying Headmaster of Beauxbatons. "But Harry has promised something. I know that most people would say I was being a fool to believe him, but he never breaks his promises to those who work for him. He has promised me that every child born different, every child whose blood isn't purely human or wizard..."* She looked away for a moment, and even though her vision was fading, Madame Maxine saw tears in her eyes. She turned back to Madame Maxine, and now her voice seemed pleading, desperate. "I have to do this, don't you see? I have to do it. You,.. you know what it's like... to be different. I'm always being accosted on the streets in Diagon Alley, always being pulled aside from the others, and I'm either lusted after or hated for my blood. That's it. That's what they judge me on. I'm not a human being at all... You know what I feel, don't you? You know my pain. And Harry gave me his word that everyone like us would be helped. I know that he's evil. But we, the half-bloods, the half-breeds, we've been subjected to evil our entire lives. Those who say they work for Good,"* she spat this word in disgust, "have never helped us. Maybe... our only hope is Evil. If Evil is our only choice, then Evil shall we be."*

Her monologue over, she stood up. Looking at her, she said, "And now, Madame Maxine, your life is over. I'm sorry it had to end this way. But just think of this."*

Her wings came forward and snapped again, and three feathers shot out. They stuck in Madame Maxine's brain, the ends seeming to sprout from the skull like some strange forest. The last words Madame Maxine ever heard were:

"No one will ever suffer as we have, ever again."*

Outside, the laughter of the Jester rang out. The students of Beauxbatons huddled inside their dorms. Fleur went to the window, opened it, and remembering the signal she and Harry had agreed upon, grabbed the Shatterstar. She raised it out the open window, and it gleamed, blue fire in the afternoon sun.

Below her, Harry looked up, and grinned. He raised his voice in a shout that carried over the battlefield, causing his soldiers to look up from the bodies of Beauxbatons former teachers.

"BEAUXBATONS IS OURS! TO VICTORY!"

His laughter echoed down Beauxbatons halls, and inside, the students trembled.

To those that are wondering.

Black Tide's Units

Marauders are the basic soldier and terror squad. Their leader is Seamus who only takes orders from Harry or Blaise depending on the situation.

Purgers are those with Skull-masters. Their leader is Terry Boot who helps make the Skull-masters and is part of the Enchanters Guild. Terry follows Harry and then Seamus' orders.

Necromancers are those that raised the dead. It was controlled by Ginny. She took orders only from Harry and requests from Seamus.

Elementalist is those that control the elements. Some Purgers are part of the Fire Elementalist but instead of staffs they use their Skull-masters as ways to cast spells, after having the enchanters' fix them to do so. All of the Eclipse is in some part of it. Some Krakens are part of it but not many. Neville is the commander of the Elementalist. He takes orders from Harry and sometimes Seamus.

Enchanters are those that make the weapons. Some battle with other groups but most don't. Leader is Cho Chang. They follow Harry's orders.

The Eclipse is the demolition experts. Their leader is Luna who follows Harry's orders then Seamus'. She is also part of the more destructive side of the Enchanters Guild.

The Kraken is the beast tamers. Their leader is Draco who follows Harry's orders then Seamus'.

The Sword fish are the assassins. Their leader is Blaise then Daphne. Both of who only take orders from Harry.

The Great White is the interrogation, slavery, and torture organization and is composed mainly of fear-casters so far. Their leader is Blaise and then Tracey. Both only take orders from Harry.

Chimera is living experiments that are used in battle. Whipstitch is the official leader but is commanded by Cho Chang so she is in command of this unit. She takes orders from Harry and then Seamus.

White Shore Squads.

Sands (warriors) are the basic soldiers. They have the greatest amount among them as well as some of their best soldiers. They are lead by Ron and Hermione currently.

Alexia795, First off I personally thing I have slightly better writing quality but you are entitled your opinion. Secondly I have been changing the original story a bit. The fact that I have the categories for the many factions in the two main opposing forces is a fact of that.

To those that wonder, Yes I know that in the books and the movies Blasé is male but I have seen too many fan-fictions that make him female that I can't not make him female as well.

Chapter five

The Ministry Awakes

In the Ministry of Magic's headquarters, Amelia Susan Bones looked down at the reports.

Beauxbatons was lost.

She couldn't believe it. With the agonizing clarity of hindsight, she wished she had voted against Harry Potter in his trial. Her rational mind knew it wouldn't have mattered (there were simply too many who supported him) but that did little to still her subconscious, which screamed again and again that it was their fault for not sending him to Azkaban in the first place. If they had simply done that, none of this would matter. She didn't know that the very trial was what had 'broken' him.

The Wizengamot had met after the first reports of Beauxbatons takeover, mostly brought from students who had fled, and they had been about to conclude the same thing they had when Hogwarts was destroyed; that rogue Death Eater remnants had gathered together and were attacking the schools. That was when the doors burst open.

Ron Weasley had trod in and thrown the dead body of a Marauder onto the floor. It was a similar body in that in his escape he had taken the head and arm from said body. His armor and cloak caked in blood, he was flanked by five White Shore soldiers. The Wizengamot guards, who had stepped forward, quailed under the looks the soldiers were giving them. There had been no war in centuries, and the irony was that the old and venerable guards were the truly green soldiers here, and the teenage White Shore soldiers

the real veterans. Hermione Granger, her new white robes trailing behind her, stepped in behind them. The doors closed as she waved her staff at them. Her original wand had been renovated at Durmstrang's and had become a staff of ivory and white gold; it was this she brought in to the Wizengamot. A month had passed since the Battle of Beauxbatons, as the soldiers had taken to calling it, and the month had not been kind to her. Lines were drawn on her face, lines that were far too old and were jarring on her young face.

Amelia Bones leaped up, furious with these children for interrupting her meeting and also, in her heart, a little scared at what it might bring with it.

"What are you doing here? The Wizengamot is meeting, you-"

"Shut up," Ron said his voice like a sudden cold wind had entered the room. Amelia Bones voice faltered and her anger left her. In its place a cold feeling, like the touch of a corpse, began at her back and spread outwards. Tendrils of ice slid all about her in an all-encompassing embrace.

"Wizengamot," Hermione began, her voice loud and commanding, demanding respect "listen to us! We have several times entreated you to open your eyes, to look all around you and see the truth! What you have tried to build for so long, true peace, is coming to an end! Hogwarts has fallen, its mighty towers now ash" an astute observer would note a slight trembling when she said that. "now Beauxbatons has fallen, taken over by an enemy scarcely less evil than Voldemort himself!" Gasps and several "Don't say his name!"s rang out in the room at this. "How many more must die before you will listen to us, to hear of what has been slowly destroying your peace?"

Amelia Bones stared at her, and then looked to the dead Marauder on the floor. "What do you wish to say?" she whispered, and the cold feeling spread further around her, seeming to mock life and true laughter, hope, happiness, drowning her in a sea of fear and laughing faces, of faces with sadist gleam, of laughter that mocked everything.

"This," Hermione said, and nodded towards the dead Marauder, "is what we stand against. Harry Potter, as you know by now, is leading this army. They call themselves the Black Tide. We stand against

them. We are the White Shore, and Durmstrang is our home. We were," and here even a less than astute observer could detect a wavering of voice, "badly harmed in the last battle. We lost a lot of men. His general, Seamus Finnigan, is a genius in battle. I've heard him called the Black General.

We cannot stand against this by ourselves. We seek your aid, Ministry. This is a war we, nor you, cannot afford to lose."

Amelia Bones looked around the Wizengamot benches. Every member turned away. She had been made, for better or worse, the Minister of Magic. She turned towards Hermione.

"We will help you," she said, and the coldness in her body seemed to start laughing... to laugh like a jester.

Harry looked over their ranks. They had grown considerably since the capture of Beauxbatons. Most of the students had joined them willingly, and Harry had let the others go. It was part of his plan.

Harry considered the brutes who would have ordered everyone in Beauxbatons to join "or else" complete fools. They would have instilled fear, but anyone who is afraid inevitably begins hating, and soon that hate would start another battle in their own ranks. To prevent this, Harry decided to act like a benevolent liberator who had freed them from the Ministry's encroaching control. The Ministry, which they had all heard the teachers complain and worry about in class, seemed like a faraway enforcer of taxes to the students; the result was that they joined the Black Tide. Harry reinforced the image of being a liberator by allowing those students who wanted to leave to be let go. The students saw them leaving of their own free will, running after the badly beaten White Shore, and then they looked at the soldiers of the Black Tide, who seemed like gods to them in their shining black, rune-engraved and glowing armor. The students decided to join up, thinking they had nothing to lose. Neville Longbottom, who had lost a great deal of weight and gained an equal amount of it in muscle, particularly impressed them. He gained over a thousand new Elementalists from Beauxbatons members. To deal with the training workload, he assigned his two best Elementalists, Padma Parvati and a former Hufflepuff named Wedge, to help him with the new recruits, designating them "Master Elementalists" and giving them a special badge that showed a compass with all four elements indicated: a mountain at South for

Earth, a bonfire at East for Fire, a swirling wave at West for Water, and a swirling tornado at North for Air. Padma was particularly happy with her new badge and showed it off proudly to everyone within twenty feet. There were few trainers or new additions for Air Elementalists, being that the "Master Elementalists" were of Earth, Water, and Fire.

The students Harry let "escape" never got very far. The fools acted like they believed Harry, and went straight down the road. Archers stationed along it shot them in the back as they passed. They never made a sound.

A few slipped through, but it didn't matter. The existence of the Tide was known, now, but it didn't matter. Oceania now had a sister town and, both Oceania and the Tide, had more men to train than they knew what to do with.

Harry christened the town made around the former Beauxbatons School of Wizardry and Witchcraft "Lunas," after the Latin word for the Moon. The Moon pulled at the tides, as Beauxbatons had pulled the Black Tide, and Harry found it fitting. Fleur Delacour was stationed as the governor of the new town. Harry kept his promise to Fleur, and within weeks a steady stream of magic renegades was flowing into Lunas. Fleur sent criers and diplomats to several major Wizarding areas (all outside the Ministry's control) with the express mission of gathering together those considered "abnormal" in the wizarding world. Werewolves, vampires, veela, and even a few assorted giants were traveling now that the news of Lunas had reached them. Fleur was greatly cheered by this and forgot her original doubt of Harry.

Deciding to go back to Oceania, Harry left a small Marauder detachment under Secondary General Vicks' (as he was now known) command at Lunas while the main army headed back towards Oceania. Padma Patil, Luna Lovegood, and Ginny Weasley stayed behind as well; Padma had to stay and help the new Elementalist recruits. Luna stayed because she saw it as irony that the town was named after what she was and what her organization represented so she stationed her organization there. Luna also helped Ginny and Fleur when they asked for her to.

Ginny was more interested in a huge mass graveyard that lay five miles north of Lunas than in the town itself. She and her

Necromancers, their ranks having grown to almost a thousand with the new recruitment, moved there and located a mining camp whose sole purpose was to remove dead bodies for their spellcasting. Night and day the grinding of stone, rock, and occasionally bone were heard at Lunas from the operation they were carrying out there. The new citizens of Lunas began calling the area the Boneyard, and the name stuck. It became known soon that Ginny would pay quite handsomely for unique skeletons and corpses, and several robberies of Muggle graveyards occurred in the following weeks. The bodies were never those of Muggles, but of wizards, for Muggle corpses were essentially useless to Ginny. Other budding grave robbers went hunting in the hills about Lunas and came back with the bodies of trolls, goblins, and various other unlucky creatures. The bodies thus taken were soon sent to the Boneyard with the Necromancers who came to Lunas once a week for supplies and would bring the payment of gold to the robbers. One very successful man made over five hundred Galleons one week when he brought back three troll bodies, all perfectly intact, as well as five goblin bodies. He had used Avadra Kedavra and killed all of them without harming the bodies, and Ginny was especially pleased with them. The next day, zombie trolls began standing guard at the Boneyard. Ginny found them useful, for they never needed neither sleep nor food, and could stand eternal watch without a single complaint, it was something that any boss would love to have.

Harry, back at Oceania and watching the Jester's Keep being built, was quite happy. The Ministry was moving to mobilize, but he had a surprise in store for them. But that could wait. He wanted to deal with Voldemort first but the Ministry would also interfere soon and they would have to be dealt with. But they would all fall before his might.

After all he was the Jester of Madness nothing could stand before him but another Jester.

He smiled, watching as the Jester's Keep began to rise before him. It would be complete next spring.

A month later

Harry looked over his army with Blasé by his side. Its ranks had doubled, what with the new Beauxbatons recruits and the magical renegades that had flowed into Lunas like men dying of thirst do to

water. The army before him consisted of 14,000 troops. He was going to need them. They now stood on a grass plain, two miles from several Portkeys that would lead them to Diagon Alley. One of Harry's spies had created these Portkeys and placed their beacons inside various locales of Diagon Alley. It would allow for a surprise attack, which was what Harry hoped for.

The army was split into ten neat divisions. The Enchanters, he noticed, had spread throughout nine, with only one in the Chimera unit, of the ten divisions. In the middle, Dusk Knights, with their now five hundred members, rode their spider mounts in the front lines, with Seamus Finnigan, who was beginning to love what he did, and being called the "Black General" was making it even better to him, at their head. Marauders, their black armor gleaming, stood behind them, over four thousand strong excluding the Dusk knights which were the most experienced Marauders.

To their left, Neville Longbottom, his long blue cape streaming in the wind, sat at the head of the Elementalists. Behind him, the three thousand strong Elementalist legions stood their staves at the ready. They all wore a small amount of armor under their robes so as to not depend solely on magic to protect them. None of them wore metal armor only leather or hide from what the Kraken gathered from dead beasts. All of what they wore was enchanted to protect them in some way. Padma Patil stood to the right and a foot and a half behind Neville, the badge marking her "Master Elementalist" flashing in the sun. She had a look of eagerness to her face. Wedge had a happy face on that was either very psychotic or very energetic. Wedge was to the left and two feet behind Neville knowing that Padma was the better Elementalist of the two of them.

To the left of the Elementalists, were the Kraken. They only numbered a thousand but the beasts that they controlled more than made up for that. All of the Kraken members could control up to three creatures. For this particular battle they would be using Ankles (which were giant insects (about ten feet long) that looks like a ant that had some serious additions to its legs and teeth) and Arrow hawks (which were large birds that had a snake like body, four wings at the center of that body, four eyes positioned around it's beak, and a sharp arrow-like black beak), mostly. (Still using DND monster manual 1, they gain control of beast with anything that is evil or neutral and under a 10 int score, higher with the higher tiers inside of the Kraken.) Those that didn't had taken a preferred

creature to control and had taken to controlling them. The Krakens all wore hides of extremely tough to kill animals, through Muggle means, that had runes on them that were made to protect them, and their bodies seemed mutated. They were all gaining features from the beasts they control the most. Drano had also gained his wish in that he had a Drake, and a Nunda, unfortunately he would also have to wait till they were the proper size for battle. He was wearing dragon hide armor and thought that a dragon would take offense to that. He would ride the Drake and the Nunda he would control from a distance. He had started growing scales on his back and legs, and his teeth and nails were becoming sharper.

To the right of the Marauders, the Necromancers waited. A thousand and five hundred strong, they were glimpses of nightmare. Ginny had been creating armor and helmets out of the skeletons unearthed (or bought) at the Boneyard, and her Necromancers now wore them. Human skulls sat atop their foreheads with their jaws open, and in the middle of their mouth the Necromancer's face peered out. The end of the jawbone, which had been magically extended, sat at their chin. It looked like nothing less than a human skull emitting a human face. The armor was of bones, sitting atop black robes that were worn underneath; rib cages protected the torso, while magically extended bone spread out to cover the legs and arms. All of the bones were enchanted in their necromantic magics. They wielded scythes whose shaft and blades were made of wizard bone, and atop each a skull gleamed. Ginny stood at their head, and she wore no armor, just ordinary black robes; but the skull of her father still hung about her neck. She stretched her leathery wings in and out constantly, impatient to begin killing and collecting corpses. The shadows of the necromancers seemed to move even when they themselves didn't.

The Eclipse was to the right of the Necromancers. Luna sat at the front of the Eclipse. They had grown to a thousand and two hundred. Luna had no second in command because she thought of them as a bit too troublesome. She had her soldiers wear leather and hide armor without any robes. They each had their own staves from their own respective Element (Don't forget that they are also all Elementalists) to help them do more mass destruction. They also were taught how the hell to dodge spells quickly. After all the longer they are alive the more destruction they can cause.

The Purgers were a thousand, two hundred and fifty strong, and their Skull-masters stood at the ready by them. The tips dripped their slow, burning liquid. The Purgers, clothed in their reddish-orange garb, were silent beside them. Each and every Purger was a pyromaniac at heart, and they could afford to be silent in contemplation of the burning that was ahead. They had gained patient by planning of the burning. Terry Boot was standing again at their head with his armor gleaming. He had gotten a second in command and was teaching him how to make Skull-masters and the burning liquid that they shot out in waves. He had gotten him half-way to done.

The Chimera unit had grown to about five hundred and thirty experiments. Whipstitch still lived and so was still the leader of the Unit. Riding him was Cho Chang who had been taken with him since his first battle. The monstrosities of that unit made the Misfits look like small puppies that had just been kicked. Some had five arms, some had ten, and some at none at all. Others had many heads. Others still had more or less legs. Few of the experiments had any sort of armor on them because they were made for pure offense. They were also all as silent as death when necessary.

The Misfits were a completely different story to the Purgers. They were howling and laughing, roaring and stomping in anticipation of their revenge against the wizards. They had named themselves the "Misfits", and they were more than willing to die for the Black Tide. Harry had given them more than a haven; he had given them a chance to fight back. As one vampire put it, "Before I had to hide, even at night, and my meals were few and far in between, but now I am free and the Jester never wants for blood." Harry, without actually meaning to, had created a legion of fanatically loyal soldiers which consisted of the most dangerous and intelligent races known to Wizard-kind. Their leader was a vampire named Samual.

Harry thought it marvelously funny.

Behind Harry himself were Sword Fish and Great White. Daphne was looking at Blasé with a bit of envy and awe. She had taught her 'art' to only five others and they were all that made up the Sword Fish, some were Creatures, some Human. He had eventually got Tracey to train more than eight students and now the 15 Great White were experienced mind-mages and all had their own ways to

cause fear and gain information. They were all Fear-mages and they only had Werewolves, Vampires, and Humans.

Harry spoke, and even the Misfits to became quiet because when the Jester spoke, you listened or you died, either from him or one of his many men.

"Men, women, and creatures if you so call yourself! The Ministry is now moving against us." Grunts and guffaws from the soldiers. They thought (rightly) that the Ministry was a bunch of weaklings. "The major Wizarding cities, in this small part of the world, have all accepted us, save one. Diagon Alley refuses us! Let us show them what happens to those who refuse the Black Tide! Onward!"

With roars and yells of battle, the army stomped off towards the Portkeys. Harry walked beside them, and he felt the darkness overtake him once more. His laughter rang out as the Portkeys began teleporting his men to Diagon Alley. Blaise joined in his laughter as well. The swirling obscured time and space, falling past dream and nightmare, heading towards reality...

One very unlucky customer of Ollivander's that day had seen a worn-down hat in the corner of the wand shop. Deciding to take it, he was wearing it when a Marauder teleported through it. His body literally exploded downward as the Marauder's body came out of the hat. The Marauder, taking no notice of the ruptured man's body before him, immediately got away from the hat. Right behind him, more Marauders were teleporting in.

In Gringott's, two goblins were standing before a vault, muttering. Strange sounds had been heard inside, and they worried about the treasure. Deciding to open it, one (it was Griphook, the goblin Harry had met his first time in Gringotts) put the key in. When he opened it, a giant's fist slammed outward, sending Griphook on a one way trip that ended with him falling past the suspended tracks into the darkness below. The giant grumbled.

"Damn fool," he said, stomping out. He was bedecked in metal armor, and on his hands spiked gauntlets gleamed.

The other goblin attempted to raise an alarm by pressing the emergency rune that lay beside the vault, but before he could a swarm of bats covered him. He was pushed off by the relentlessly

biting horde and his screams echoed in the corridors. A vampire strolled out of the vault, and the bats returned to him, floating about him in a cloud. He wore a black cape, and his pale face shown above it.

"Indeed," he said to his giant companion. The giant stomped into the trolley (which groaned under his weight) and set off towards the main bank of Gringotts. Throughout the catacombs, other giants were doing the same. They planned to create enough havoc within Gringotts that the goblins (which both Harry and Seamus, who had together planned the attack, regarded as the most dangerous obstacle) would be unable to help the Alley until it was too late.

The vampires, who could not stand sunlight, were to attack the catacombs. The catacombs were enormous, pitch-black places that allowed no light save torchlight, and several dragons, manticores, and even a few elementals guarded the deepest vaults. In addition, scores of goblins, all heavily armed, roamed the catacombs, riding both the trolley tracks and running along special paths in the rock. Not much for a vampire to contend with.

The vampire and his bat horde lifted off the ground and flew off, down into the darkness, and his fangs glittered in torchlight.

The Portkeys were all hidden in strategic points, and with the sole exception of the hat in Ollivander's, none were disturbed. At the Apothecary, two women who had been about to buy some owls were shocked to discover a Purger erupting out of a piece of parchment none of them had noticed until now. They were even more shocked when he opened up with his Skull-master and they burst into flames and soon became ashes.

In the Leaky Cauldron, a drunk wizard, sitting down in a corner and leaning against the wall, was completely unsurprised when a female Air Elementalist teleported into being from a beer stein. Looking at her, he said, "Hey, girlie! How are you?"

The Elementalist looked at him and summoned her power. Pressure flickered from her fingertips and hit his torso. It instantly destroyed his spine and most of his organs. The bartender, who had been far more disturbed by her sudden appearance than the late drunk, said "What the hell-

She looked at him and triggered her power again. Instead of pressure destroying his body, however, she simply cut off air around him. The bartender died of a loss of oxygen; lying across the bar he so loved. She then started a fire and it began to spread across the bar as she walked out. Behind her, more Elementalists appeared, and one had the good sense to take the beer stein outside. He dropped it outside the back door of the Leaky Cauldron, which was now on fire. He rushed forward to join the pitched battle that was taking place in the streets of the Alley.

In the cauldron shop, a Dusk Knight, complete with spider mount, erupted from a wand. The owner had time to scream once before the Dusk Knight's spear burst through his skull. The three customers screamed right before the spider leaped on one of them, jaws rending his flesh. A werewolf emerged from the wand on the floor, and looked at the other two customers, who had tripped over one another. He smiled and busted the vial in his hand. The vial was a potion called Lunar Eclipse, and it's most stellar use was that it completely mimicked the light of the full moon. The werewolf mutated right in front of the horrified customers. He leaped on one of them and, grabbing his face in his mutated, claw-like hands, twisted his head off. One snap of his jaws silenced the screaming of the other customer. His head rolled onto the floor. Both the werewolf and the Dusk Knight ran outside to help the other members of the army. A chimera with multiple head of a dog, five legs and three tails came out of the wand and burst out the window of the shop.

The Alley was awakening to battle, and several spells were already flying. A Marauder tangled with a blacksmith in the street. The Marauder was slashing at the smith, who slung his hammer outward. It caught the Marauder in the head and stunned him. As the smith was about to strike, a spear of ice pierced his chest. He dropped his hammer and groaned as he fell. Neville Longbottom, ignoring the dazed Marauder, turned and swept his staff at a nearby fountain. Water shot out in a rock-solid torrent, crushing several nearby wizards.

A Purger was engaged in a lethal game of tag with a fat merchant; every time the Purger tried to burn him, the merchant Disapparatus. Finally the merchant Apparatus behind him and stabbed him in the back with a knife. The knife went through the protective metal of the Purger's tank and caused an explosion because the safety runes had been breached. Both the merchant and the Purger were

devoured in flames. Only the flame immune material of the Purge's suit was unburned.

Padma Patil stood behind the major battle, and raised her arms. An enormous earthquake rippled through Diagon Alley, tearing down buildings and killing many of its citizens. London was also experiencing the earthquake and had started to lose people to it. The green energy of Earth flowed outward from her, and Ollivander's tumbled downwards in a storm of dirt and rubble. Only Gringotts and the Ministry were untouched; wards of energy designed to halt earthquakes kept them standing. The earthquake had the intended effect of destroying most of Diagon Alley and some of London, but several unintentional consequences resulted as well.

A Dusk Knight nearby suddenly found himself fighting a huge dog that had been released by Padma's earthquake. The nearby Bestiary shop specialized in breeding magical creatures, and the dog was one of the newer creations. The dog ran forward, and the Dusk Knight struck it in the face. It backed off, bleeding. It charged again, and the Dusk Knight's mount leaped onto a still-standing building nearby, where it clung to the vertical wall with its eight limbs. The dog's forward momentum slammed it into the wall, and the Dusk Knight dropped down on top of it. The dog's high-pitched yelping rang out as the spider bit and bit again, tearing through the animal's flesh and poisoning it.

Also freshly released from the Bestiary, a giant crab walked out onto the battlefield. Its claws grabbed a Marauder and crushed him. Blood gushed from his black armor as he died. Ginny, who had been flying over the battle, shouted out a spell. The words were thick, guttural, and seemed to ripple the very air. A horde of screaming, shrieking skeletal ghosts flew towards the crab, lifting it off the ground as they tore and scraped at its hide. They dismembered it and returned to Ginny. She flew off, in search of other creatures to kill.

Arrowheads seemed to rain on a certain part of Diagon Alley. Krakens nearby watched as the snake-like birds ate those in Diagon Alley. Antheogs were coming out of the ground and grabbing merchants and then going but underground waiting for more prey. A large explosion came from nearby. Draco turned to see Luna smiling and looking at her work. A dragon made of air came rushing past her to her next target.

Inside Madame Malkin's Robes for All Occasions, Mrs. Weasley had been shopping for robes when Harry and Blaise were portkeyed inside from a quill on the floor. She believed that Harry had not only killed her husband, but Ginny too, because on the clock in her house, Ginny's picture pointed towards Death, alongside Mr. Weasley's. When he stepped forward, both she and Madame Malkin stopped dead in their tracks. Blaise went out the door and guarded it to make sure there was no interruptions.

"What in the hell-" Madame Malkin began. Harry, who wanted no interruptions when he killed Mrs. Weasley, snapped his hand outward. The force of his blow traveled through the air and sliced her face apart. Blood flew out and splashed against the back wall as her body fell.

Mrs. Weasley, her rage returning to her, shouted out "You! Harry, you bastard! How could you kill Ginny and my poor husband! How could you! We cared for you, you-"

"I never killed Ginny," Harry said, his voice calm and smooth. He folded his hands in the death pose, crossed over his chest, while he walked steadily forward towards her. The Portkey he had used was a private one; there would be no interruptions. "She chose to become a Necromancer. And as for your husband... well, Ginny killed him. She said such a crime would give her great power. And it has."

Mrs. Weasley stared at him, her mouth an open O of horror. Harry felt greatly cheered by this.

"Yes, she killed him," he said, reveling in the look of horror on her face, "and simply for the power that came from it. So you see I never touched either of them. I just let Ginny do what she wanted. That's all."

He stepped forward and raised his still-crossed hands to the sides of his face. "Don't worry. You won't live with this knowledge very long."

He snapped his hands outward, uncrossing them, and an X of sheer force erupted out of his claws. It split Mrs. Weasley's torso apart, and the four halves fell to the floor separately. The last thing she

saw was the grinning death-mask of the Jester and the back of Blaise

- Next update: the battle for Gringotts!

Chapter 6

Breaking the Bank

* *- Indicates telepathy

Gringotts was about as old as things got in the Wizarding world. It had been created by a goblin named Grin as a way to hoard his stolen gold, but when he saw the money he could make giving loans and having others pay interest (or stealing when others wouldn't pay back loans they owed), he turned it into a bank. His best friend, a goblin named Gotts, joined him in this affair, and it started life as "Grin and Gotts Wizarding Bank." After several hundred years, the goblins merged the names in honor of its founders, christening it "Gringotts." Gringotts had a reputation for safety that was unmatched. No expense was spared in its creation. The catacombs ran for miles under the surface, under all of Diagon Alley and most of London. Long, snake-like dragons called Wyrms were bred specifically as watchdogs for the high-security vaults, and armed goblin patrols constantly guarded the catacombs. Spells, runecraft, monsters- it was believed Gringotts was invincible.

This was not so.

For you see, in Gringotts there was a very special vault, located in the middle of the bank and about a mile under the ground. This vault was the most heavily guarded of all, and only the highest ranking goblins in Gringotts even knew of its existence. Dumbledore had owned one of two keys that would unlock that vault, and it had been lost when Hogwarts fell. The second key was held by the current Head Goblin at Gringotts, a tough, wiry goblin named Tesla. The key was simple and unadorned, made so that no thief who could break into Gringotts would steal it. The key was bound to the owner, and only if Tesla's hand held the key would it work.

The precautions were taken for a single reason. Most Elementalists draw their power from the very souls of the four Elements. These souls, known as the Elemental Orbs, were once guarded in the Ministry of Magic. Voldemort had made repeated attempts to take them, so Dumbledore had them moved from the Ministry and placed in Gringotts. The four Orbs were hence protected from Voldemort's attacks, and deemed safe. They had not been moved since, for

Dumbledore had been afraid Voldemort wasn't dead (and rightly so) and left them at Gringotts under Tesla's protection. There they had stayed, glowing in the ebony darkness.

The quake wards about Gringotts had done their job, and no physical signs of the quake ever hit Gringotts. But waves of the magical energy went past the wards and into the bank- into the catacombs- and far below the surface, into the Vault.

And in that complete darkness that so mirrored Harry's soul, a green light pulsed softly and oh so slowly.

Seamus Finnigan looked around, his sword at the ready. His mount had been killed, so he stood now. Cries of battle and war filled his ears. Spells flew and buildings collapsed. His men were in front of him, fighting a group of particularly courageous merchants or customers. The screams of the dying rang out.

Seamus was having the time of his life.

Seamus never told anyone, even Harry, though he knew and Seamus knew he knew, about it, but he had had a very hard upbringing. His parents were extremely harsh, draconian people, always pushing him for more, more. He gave all he had in him, and it was never enough. He never earned their approval. At Hogwarts, he dreaded going home as much as Harry had, and his heart felt like it would burst with joy when the first day of school arrived. He always stepped onto the train at Platform Nine and Three Quarters without looking back. There was no need to; his parents were already gone, without a wave or goodbye passing between them. His whole life he would be hounded by this image, his back and head hung in sorrow while his parents walked away. He would see it in dreams, and wake with tears on his face. It cast a gloom on his whole life.

When the D.A. had started (on what seemed like a day millions of years ago), he had jumped at the chance. The reason was simple. He liked to live a life outside his parents, and what they didn't know about him they couldn't judge. He had joined for that reason only. He had problems with authority, and that was why he was so disrespectful to Harry at first. He viewed all authority the way he viewed his parents- as damn fools, in other words- but he never let

himself tell his parents that. He couldn't. The bonds of supposed love and the thought that it shouldn't be this way kept him from lashing out at them. Against other authority, he had no such qualms.

When the D.A. became the Black Tide, with his subsequent promotion to General, he changed. Some of it was the alcohol (he was a regular patron of the Laughing Mug, and had become the owner's favorite customer, which had opened a shop in Lunas and extended its business), but most of it was this: he liked it because his parents had no idea what he was. They had no idea that men bowed to him, followed his command, that others respected him. That, in short, he was better than them.

A short-lived grin spread on his face, then was replaced by a calculating look. He ran forward on the cobbled paths of the street, and leaped into the air, his magic carrying him far above the ruined alleys of Diagon Alley. Bringing his sword down with all his strength, he tore through a merchant. The man died with his skull split in two.

Turning, Seamus cast a magic he had recently developed. Time slowed down. He heard his heart pump once... twice... three times. The beats were slow and well defined. He stepped forward, each action seeming to take minutes. He brought his sword down on a merchant and watched the impact. Blood flew up in slow droplets that stayed in the air, shining like crimson. His sword seemed to glide through the merchant's flesh, parting it like water. Seamus turned, watching the blood droplets still floating in the air, and sliced the customer of that merchant. His upwards blow unzipped the man's abdomen, from groin to chest. His body lifted upwards, and he stayed there, falling slowly. Seamus turned once more, facing the last of the people around him. The man was still gaping at the corpse of the first man Seamus had killed. Seamus ran at him, arm extended, blade trailing. The man's headless corpse stood standing as the head slowly somersaulted in the air. The man's mouth and eyes slowly widened, as if in shock at his own decapitation. Seamus stopped and released the spell, gazing as he did at the arrows and spells seeming to hang in mid-air, suspended. The combatants looked like characters in a slow-moving picture, each swing and step taking seconds.

The spell released with a rush, and the battle returned to normal speed in Seamus' eyes. A Marauder later stated that after Seamus had leapt and killed the first merchant, he had seen a blur of black.

The other three men looked as if invisible blades were slicing them. The entire attack had lasted barely three seconds.

Seamus, tired from his spell, stood panting and watched his men fight. They were doing well. Soon they would be at Gringotts.

He smiled again, and rushed forward to battle. He saw Draco and Luna heading towards Gringotts as well. They were causing major damage to the surroundings and to the people. Luna was doing more to the surroundings than the people with Draco being her opposite.

Underneath Gringotts...

A group of goblins, armed to the teeth with swords and axes, wandered the catacombs, torches flickering in the seemingly endless darkness. Unbeknownst to them, they were about to become dinner.

The first inkling of danger went through their leader, who saw a bat flutter by. Knowing they were too far underground for bats, he said, "What is-"

He never got to finish his sentence. A shadow dropped from the ceiling, covered him, and fell into the velvet darkness. He didn't even have time to scream.

The other goblins, four in all, pulled together, gazing about in fear and confusion. They brought their weapons to bear, ready to strike. All about them, the darkness suddenly laughed. The laughter seemed to come from everywhere at once, and that was when a horde of chittering, shrieking bats suddenly swooped out of nowhere onto the group. Screams and goblin curses filled the air as the ravenous beasts tore through the skin and reached tender flesh filled with sweet, nursing blood.

Behind them, not three steps beyond their torchlight, the vampire smiled. His fangs glimmered as he stepped forward and crouched over the body of a goblin, and began to feed. After finishing he started laughing the laughter of one of the Ebony Flame, the laughter of the Jester that came through them from their lord Harry Potter, the Jester of Madness. This vampire's name was Samual

and his lord would be pleased when he learned that all the goblins in the catacombs had fallen.

In numbers, the goblins were never as numerous as wizards. So they won their wars in a different way. They used science.

Although most Wizards scoffed at Muggle inventions, they had no idea how effective science actually was. Those few times when Magic met Science, the winner usually ended up being Science. One particular instance, which warranted a file Mr. Weasley had kept in his desk at all times when he was still alive, involved an American-made Abrams M-1A1 tank. The crew had been on a routine patrol when two dragons, a mating pair, had landed in front of them. The dragons had thought they had found a strange, scaled creature, and were going to see if they could eat it. Although the tank crew members had freaked, they had had enough sense to fight back. The result was two dragon corpses with giant holes where their hearts used to be. An Abrams' main cannon is a big gun, and at close range does large, unpleasant things to the most powerful creatures. Every Ministry member at the scene had been shocked that the tank crew had managed to survive. It spoke volumes about the need for secrecy. The Ministry did not believe Wizards could survive a war with Muggles. The incident was never mentioned, and the general Wizarding community kept up their haughtiness at Science. The tank crew's memories were wiped cleaned, and it passed into history.

Goblins, lacking the arrogance of Wizards, worked at science and discovered the key to its use. Wizards put off an aura that disrupted electronics in the area, unless the electronics were coated in gold. Gold-plated circuitry became standard Goblin equipment soon afterward.

The end result was that the Goblins possessed the most high-tech weaponry in the entire world, Muggle or Wizard. They used weapons Muggles only dreamed of. It was these weapons that Seamus and his men ended up fighting against. They also happened to capture many of them.

Gringotts had opened for business like normal that day, with goblins running about and performing their jobs. The first indication of trouble was the huge, building-shaking roar that stopped them all dead in their tracks. A giant, coated in mail plates and sporting

spiked gloves, stomped off a trolley into the room. The first goblins were shell-struck and didn't move. The giant stomped them flat and kept going.

The second indicator of trouble was the second roar that split the air. This one seemed made up of several screams, including one of a human. Whipstitch leaped out of another trolley-cart, and on its patched back Cho Chang stood, riding it like Death on his pale steed. A long chain attached to Whipstitch in her hand, her girlish laughter rang out as Whipstitch slammed its bloody cleaver into the nearest set of desks, killing the goblins there. Dudley screamed on Whipstitch's chest, his mind a black madness which allowed no conscious thought or feeling but terror and pain.

The goblins, breaking out of their shocked silence, scrambled for weapons. Other giants soon entered the enormous ground floor, spiked gauntlets beating a rapid tattoo into any goblins nearby. One's mailed fist slammed into a group of goblins sitting at a table, breaking wood and bones. A Large bull like creature with many bull heads with teeth like a shark's, came charging through a side entrance and grabbing at goblins with it many heads and charging at the same time started rampaging in Gringotts

One goblin reached a weapon case on the west wall, broke the lock, and grabbed what looked like a too-bulky rifle. Aiming at a giant, he twisted a knob and then pulled the trigger. A whirring noise emerged from it, and a shockwave fired from the end of the gun. The wave of sheer force hit the giant in the face and knocked him backwards, staggering him against a wall. He laid there, face bleeding. He felt like he'd just been sucker-punched by another giant. His breath came in gasps and heaves.

Another goblin, farther away on the western wall, had grabbed a gun that faintly resembled a Gatling gun, multiple barrels and all. He pulled it out, lugged its barrel towards the fallen giant, and pulled the trigger. The barrels began to spin, and from each barrel a sharp, pointed object emerged. They flew in a rapid-fire blast into the giant, knifing into his chest. They exploded into shrapnel as they hit, tearing far larger holes than they should have in his flesh and sending sharp shards into his body. Blood gushed out of the gored holes in his chest. His heart was pierced, and he died instantly, his blood coating the floor as his enormous corpse pitched to the side.

Another group of goblins reached a weapon case on the eastern wall and were about to open it when Whipstitch's enchanted flail and chains hit them. Rippling through the air, it shattered the weapon case, the goblins, and most of Gringott's east wall. Cho laughed as she directed Whipstitch to assault another group. The giants, raging at the loss of their fellow, stomped forward at the western wall. It was at this point in the assault that Padma Patil unleashed her earthquake, and although it didn't effect the building physically, it did cause a few goblins to stop and wonder what was happening. They were soon killed by the berserking giants.

The goblins holed up around weapon cases and counters and quickly-erected magic barricades, and would have held out longer if Seamus hadn't showed up then with Luna and Draco not far behind. His forces broke down the main door of Gringotts with a single strike of a battering ram, and yelling out commands to his men, Seamus led the charge. Many goblins died before they even realized the Tide was behind them.

One goblin, carrying the Gatling weapon the goblins had named a "Splicer", aimed at the incoming hordes and started firing. Several died before a Dusk Knight's mount flung its webbing and caught the gun in his hand, jerking it out. His body was sliced apart by the incoming horde soon afterward, soon afterward one of the Marauders picking up the gun and putting it into a pocket on the back of his uniform.

The goblin that had shot the giant first swung his gun - an invention called a "Hygar", after its inventor- swung his weapon towards the army. Cranking the knob on the side to maximum, he let loose with a full force blast. The shockwave shattered bones and skulls when it connected, and blood flew everywhere. A werewolf leapt onto the walls, and using the claws on his feet to dig in ran along the wall in a strange leaping pattern. The goblin shot at him with the Hygar and missed, destroying a window and scattering glass everywhere. The werewolf leapt on him and bore him down with his weight, jaws snapping and claws tearing.

A mile below the battlefield, the Orb of Earth gleamed. And the vault began to rise.

All elements were equal, or so the Ministry proclaimed. Yet public opinion had always held that Air was the greatest of them, and Earth the lowest. Daily Prophet Columnists and high-ranking wizards made fun of it, claiming it was the element of brutes and fools. Subtlety was highly valued in Wizarding circles, and Earth's sheer strength was offensive to many. So Earth was always disregarded, and the Orb of Earth began to hate. The Orbs, being the souls of the elements, were in constant contact with all of their own Elementalist and Elementals. They had thoughts and minds of their own. Some of them even ate souls of the other orbs elementalist. And Earth's mind was poisoned from years of hating in the dark.

That was when Harry's army had started, and Padma had become an Earth Elementalist. Earth began to ponder this, and formed plans. And when it felt Padma's power, it emerged, drawing the vault upwards with the force of the earth. It was coming to claim a Queen, and with her, rule all things. The bright green of Earth's orb darkened, befitting the mind inside it. The dark green light flowed out from the orb, coating the room.

In the dark, the other orbs trembled though from being scared or excited no one would ever know. And the power of Earth covered the vault.

Padma was the first to notice anything happening. As an Elementalist of Earth, she was very perceptive of it, and felt something coming, something incredibly old and powerful. And she heard a voice. She stopped, the battle raging about her, and cocked her head, listening. Although a goblin fired at her, his Splicer's barrels spinning, the blades sunk to the ground before they came near her. The goblin wondered at this and chose a different target. Draco and Luna with their own units had arrived in time to see him choosing a new target.

PADMA...

The voice was deep, as deep as a valley and high as a mountain. It sounded old and young at the same time or maybe just truly ageless it sounded male and female at the same time, and Padma felt the weight of mountains behind it. The voice was calm and slow.

"Yes?" she said aloud, her voice unnoticed in the heat of the battle. Beside her, a Marauder died, his throat a ragged hole where a

Splicer bullet had ripped it out. She took no notice. Luna cast a spell that destroyed the area around the goblin and the goblin itself making a gory scene right in front of her.

I AM EARTH. I AM THE POWER THAT YOU FOLLOW, THE POWER THAT LIES IN MOUNTAINS AND VALLEYS. I AM YOUR MASTER.

"Master," Padma said, bowing her head and dropping to one knee. "What have I done to deserve this honor?" For one of the few times in her life, she was being completely honest.

YOU HAVE BEEN A LOYAL SERVANT TO ME. YOU HAVE SHOWN MANY HOW GREAT MY POWER IS, HOW FOOLISH THEY WERE TO CURSE AND DAMN ME. AND I WILL GIVE YOU A REWARD.

"What, Master?" she said, her voice turning breathless. She felt a flowing of power, could see it all around her. Combatants on both sides stopped, feeling something as well, but only Padma could see the energy, the force, flowing about Gringotts' main floor. Draco, having seen everyone stopping, forced the Antheys with him to attack the goblins. He didn't have his Drake and Nundu because they were still growing and wouldn't be of the proper size for battle till the next spring when the Jester's Keep was completed. The Antheys started to attack the Goblins who were still frozen in shock of the power flowing through the room. They killed five while they were frozen before the goblins unfrozen and started fighting back.

I WILL RAISE YOU HIGHER THAN ALL MY OTHER SERVANTS. YOU SHALL BE THE QUEEN OF EARTH. YOU WILL BE THE GREATEST OF THEM ALL, GREATER THAN FIRE OR WATER OR AIR. YOU WILL BE IMMORTAL, A GODDESS AMONG HUMANS.

"Master," she said, bowing her head once more, "I follow your wishes."

THEN FEEL MY POWER. OPEN THE VAULT BEFORE YOU! RELEASE ME FROM CHAINS OF BONDAGE AND LET THEM KNOW MY POWER!

The vault that the Orb of Earth had laid in for years suddenly erupted from the ground, killing several Marauders and goblins from the force of it. The earth had vomited up her treasure.

"How, Master?" she said, standing in awe of Earth's power.

A KEY, HELD BY THE HEAD GOBLIN OF THIS BANK. FIND HIM AND KILL HIM. TAKE THE KEY, CUT OF HIS HAND AND RELEASE YOUR MASTER, AND TAKE YOUR PLACE AS QUEEN!

Bowing quickly towards the vault, Padma set off at a full run, sprinting, for the stairs that lay in Gringotts eastern wall, heading up towards the Head Goblin's room. Several times bullets or spells arced towards her, but Earth protected her with a field of gravity. Nothing touched her.

Racing up the stairs, she heard its voice one last time.

I CANNOT PROTECT YOU THERE, FOR THERE ARE SPELLS IN PLACE I CANNOT PIERCE. BUT YOUR MAGICS SHALL SUFFICE. GO!

Staff at the ready, she began casting her first spell. On the battlefield below, taking a breather behind overturned desk, Ginny smiled. She had heard Earth's command as well, being attuned to the psychic plane. She sent a mental message to Seamus.

Seamus. It's Ginny. I'm using telepathy to talk to you- don't say anything. Do you see Padma running up the stairs? Go after her.

Seamus who had been about to stab a goblin looked around when he first heard Ginny in his mind, then nodded his assent to no one in particular. Executing the goblin with a stab to the chest, he talked to his men with his helmet's magic.

"Men! I need to get to the stairs. Whoever is closest to the stairs, I have an order! Keep the stairs clear of goblins and intact! Luna, Draco and Ginny are in charge here tell I return! Do you hear me?"

"Sir!" A dozen different replies echoed in his head. Seamus nodded once more and ran for the stairs. His men were already clearing the

surrounding area of goblins. Seamus smiled at the efficiency of his men, and began chasing after Padma.

Tesla stood in his room, suited up for battle. He knew it was a lost cause when he had looked down and seen the battlefield. They'd been surprised, and not even their technology could hold out for long. Already the goblins were being pushed into a corner, and as he watched a Purger assaulted a group of goblins holed up behind an overturned stone table. His Skull-master's stream of liquid fire hit the stone and melted it, setting the goblins behind on fire. He heard their screams from his balcony above the battle. Sighing and stepping in, he picked up his own weapon. It was a special design he'd created himself nearly four decades before. He called it a Bayonet. The handle was that of a normal gun, and so was the barrel, but a long sword was attached to the bottom, useful for close encounters. It fired Eclipse bullets, powerful bullets that essentially vaporized the target. He was planning on making his stand here, where he had ruled Gringotts for so long.

The door, its runes flashing as its protective spells activated, was soon blown open by an enormous rocky hand. Padma stood behind it, already chanting her next spell. Seamus was behind her, running hard. Although Padma, behind the rock fist, couldn't see it, Seamus had seen Tesla aiming his Bayonet. Seamus had no idea what the weapon was, but he doubted it was good, as all the other weapons here had been extremely powerful. He reached Padma and jerked her downward just as Tesla fired. A beam of white light flared outward, vaporizing the rock fist and turning everything over Seamus' head into dust. Padma, who had had the breath knocked out of her from Seamus' jerk, lay under him, panting. Some of her hair was caught in the blast and simply disappeared, as if it was never there. Seamus cringed and ducked low, sure the blast would kill him.

The wave of white light ended, and smoke emerged from the doorway. Tesla looked at it with grim satisfaction, thinking he had killed them. Seamus' dagger, perfectly thrown, flew through the door and pierced his chest. His lungs pierced, he coughed and died slowly, his last thought [We made a stand, at least. And that's all that has ever mattered, isn't it?] He never got an answer to that question as he died.

Padma ran in, barely looking at Seamus, and began searching Tesla's body frantically. She finally pulled out several keys, and deciding to try them all, cut off his right hand with Seamus' dagger and ran back down the stairs. Seamus, who stood watching her, went over to grab his dagger and looked at the Bayonet. He grinned and grabbed it. Looking it over, he pumped it once- looked like his Muggle studies were coming in handy after all! His new weapon loaded, he ran down the stairs after Padma.

Padma had almost reached the vault, still trying to figure out which key it was, when Earth's voice broke through her panic.

AT EASE, PADMA. IT IS THE UNADORNED KEY, THE ONE IN YOUR LEFT HAND.

She looked at it, and thanking all the gods, ran to the lock in the vault. She grabbed the goblin's hand put the key in it and inserting the key into the vault. She pull opened the vault and stepped back. Her face was one of almost unbearable anticipation and naked hunger.

And the power of Earth flowed into the room.

Seamus, who had reached the bottom of the stairs when Padma opened the vault, raised his new-found Bayonet up to block the sudden rush of dark-green light. He could feel tremendous amounts of force being gathered all about him. It was coming to a focal point in Padma. Her laughter, which had started high-pitched (normal for her age and gender) became deeper and seemed to be made up of two different voices: hers and a deeper, infinitely greater one.

Ginny, who still lay crouched behind an overturned table sent a message to Seamus, Luna and Draco. *Get down,* she thought to them. Seamus dropped to the floor, shouting a command to his men to do the same.

A rush of sheer magical force, light green in color, emitted from Padma, the goblins and Marauders still standing in the room were blown off their feet, and even the giants had trouble resisting. The entire world seemed made of green light, and Seamus thought that maybe he should have let Tesla kill Padma, since it seemed she

was going to kill them all with the sheer strength she had gained. Power kept rushing to her, and the light grew brighter and brighter.

And then, it stopped.

Seamus thought he had been struck blind, but his eyes eventually adjusted back to normal. Propping himself up on his hands, he glanced upwards, his sight clearing. His pupils widened, and he saw with increasing clarity what stood before him. He gazed at it, then shook his head to clear the image away- it was impossible. When he looked again, it was still there, and still he did not believe it, wasn't willing to believe it.

Padma floated in the air above him, suspended on a cushion of gravitational force. Long, flowing green robes that draped to the earth hung off her body. They seemed to reach the floor, but when Seamus followed them down he saw they actually went into the ground, disappearing into it. Her hair had turned a brilliant orange-red, the color of molten lava- which, when one thought about it, was merely earth in liquid form. Her face was more angular, more regal. Seamus thought it the face of a queen almost without conscious thought. However he would not abandon Harry over this regal woman that had changed so suddenly.

Although her body was lost in the draping folds of her robes, her arms protruded from magnificently embroidered sleeves, and on each hand countless rocks glittered, on her right hand, a bracelet of gold encompassed an enormous green rock, that was almost transparent but just barely not meaning it wasn't a emerald (which is created pressure, which is not in Earth's realm of powers but Air's), a dark-green that Seamus had never seen before, a color he hadn't even suspected existed before now. It pulsed slowly. Her hands were immaculately nailed, painted a pretty green that matched her robes and the rock. They hung by her sides, bent at the elbows, her hands ready for spellcasting. Her eyes, before normal human eyes, were now shining green orbs of energy, blazing with the power of Earth.

Circling her constantly were two dragon statues, long creations made of earth and rock. Forming two complete circles, the designs on the rock showed a dragon chasing its own tail. At times they passed under her, through the emerald curtain, almost as if they did not exist. Although Seamus did not see it, Ginny saw that in truth

they did not. As attuned to the magic realm as she was, Ginny saw that the robes were merely a visible representation of the true bonds of magic linking Padma to the earth. They were, in short, an illusion that was extremely powerful but not really there at all to anyone but Padma.

Padma turned her head, glancing at one of the remaining groups of goblins. The green lights that were her eyes flared briefly, and every single goblin in her sight turned to stone. Each was frozen in a position of amazement, mouths gaping.

Another goblin, breaking from the daze Padma had inspired, aimed his Hygar cannon at her and fired. The powerful shockwave broke apart and disappeared as if it had never existed when it hit the force field generated by the spinning dragons. The stone dragons spun very quickly and formed a vertical ring about Padma. Power sparked to life between them, and Padma's eyes flared once more, and the goblin stopped dead, the Hygar dropping from his hands. His body was torn apart as opposing gravitational forces, too strong to resist, rending his body into pieces. Gore flew everywhere.

This broke the tenuous courage of the goblins. They began to flee like rats, trying to get to the door and into the dubious safety of the streets. And every time, Padma killed them, her eyes flaring, before they got there. Seamus, Ginny, Luna, Draco and their men didn't have to move at all.

Looking at her as the last goblin, body pierced by a dozen different spears of rock, fell to the ground, Seamus said, "My God. Somebody better call Harry- he may want to see this."

Padma, smiling softly, said in her new and strange voice, "Yes, he may."

Harry ran through the street of Diagon Alley, his hands behind him and to the sides. The sheer force and speed of his running pulled them back, and as the Jester, his claws glittered in the shafts of sunlight tearing apart those that he passed with Blaise killing those that survived. Hogsmeade would be in a state of panic, orders being yelled to and fro. Several survivors of the initial attack on Diagon Alley and Gringotts had already Disapparated to Hogsmeade and were telling their tale. The Three Broomsticks was completely full,

mostly with questioning and curious fools. Harry turned down a side alley, knowing full well what it was. It was Knockturn Alley. He was going to a meeting.

Inside Knockturn Alley, he along with his companion made his way down the dark streets. He turned into a shop whose sign stated it was "The Best Black Magic and Torture Shop in Knockturn Alley!" Inside he met with one of his soldiers, a former Beauxbatons student named Lamium. Lamium had become a Necromancer when Ginny had taken over. The room was pitch black, save for light from two torches on the walls. They burned with an eerie blue light, the light of Necromancer magic. Seven black sacks, bundled with rope, lay on the ground. The room was devoid of furniture of any sort.

"Lamium," Harry said to him as he entered, blowing the door wide open and shutting it too fast for Lamium to see more than a blur, "are they ready?"

Lamium nodded. His skull helmet, making him more an apparition of death than a human, bobbed up and down. Maybe he should have the Marauders wear something more terrifying? "Yes, my lord," he said, his voice thick with a French accent. Blaise nearby, having entered at the same time as Harry, pulled on a mask.

"Excellent," Harry said. He walked over to a bundle and cut the ropes. Lamium said, as Harry looked inside, "Don't do that, sir, it's dangerous..."

Harry cut him off with a wave of his hand. No mere poisons could endanger him and Blaise was protected by the mask she now wore. He looked inside, smiling under his mask, and what he saw inside caused him to burst into laughter. The Necromancer, who thought he had seen the darkest things in existence, shuddered at the sound and backed away a step. This... being, because he could no longer be considered human, was much darker than anything he would likely ever see again. Blaise looked inside as well and didn't laugh though Lamium could see the mirth in her eyes. He involuntarily held his scythe in front of him defensively, like a shield.

Inside the black bag was a former Beauxbatons student. Some who had ran away were caught instead of killed, for even then Harry had been formulating a plan for Hogsmeade, which he doubted would join him after what he did to Hogwarts. The student no longer looked

human, however or living at all. He was covered in boils, bumps and sores that oozed thick pus and gaped red and open-mouthed on his skin. He had more blood on him than Harry had originally thought to be in the human body. He was obviously feverish, his face sweating copiously, and only the spell placed on him kept him from crying out in pain and suffering. As it was, his mouth moved constantly, silently screaming for something to end his suffering. His entire body was bloated, like a corpse drowned in a river for months, and his eyes were huge, sightless things, covered in a white, coating film that literally came out of his eyes and poured down his face. His nose was a caked mass of snot and blood. Harry glanced at the naked man's body, and saw the bones showing through his skin where his body would no longer hold anything in. The smell of human urine and shit permeated the bag. Harry laughed again and closed the bag. Turning, he looked at Lamium, who had forced himself to put the scythe down.

"Excellent work, Ginny's, I presume?"

Lamium nodded. His tongue felt too thick, too dry, to be of any use. Harry had completely unnerved him with his laughter and Blaise had only helped that with her hidden mirth. It had absolutely terrified the Necromancer. This being before him was beyond what he could comprehend and he really didn't want to comprehend it ever.

"I must remember to thank her later," Harry said, noticing and enjoying the obvious terror in Lamium's eyes, visible in the eye sockets of his skull helm. He saw Blaise gaining power from it as well. So she had gotten Tracey to teach her. He considered laughing again and scaring him worse, then thought better of it. No use having a minion that had a heart attack because of you, is it? "Don't you agree?"

Lamium nodded, a stiff and unnatural maneuver. He fervently wished he could get out of here. Ginny was dark and evil, but then again, Lamium was too, being a Necromancer. Evil, normal human evil, he could and did deal with every single day. Harry, and Blaise to an extent, however was something else entirely. Harry wasn't human, wasn't even close to being human, and his evil was likewise greater and darker than anything human. Blaise on the other hand was still human but just barely could be considered it and was at the limit of her humanity. Lamium saw her becoming refreshed by his and the students terror and pain.

"Let's get these," Harry said, indicating the black sacks, "upstairs to the Portkeys. I assume everything is ready?"

Lamium nodded again. Harry walked off towards the far wall, and tapping a hidden button, ascended the stairs that appeared where the wall had been, Blaise following behind him happily. Lamium, more than happy to have Harry gone, quickly chanted a levitation spell and followed him up the stairs.

The stairs led to the rooftop, and as Harry reached the top he saw a small hat. He, Blaise and then Lamium touched it and all the bags and activated it. They arrived in the shrieking Shack, and on top of the building was a little something his men had constructed and then teleported here: a catapult. This one was a magically enhanced catapult that Cho had created, one that had a range capable of hitting everything in Hogsmeade from here, with pinpoint accuracy to boot. Harry had made it in preparation of a siege. When they arrived at the top, Harry felt a strange and disconcerting moment, a moment when a great deal of power flowed to one spot. It was this moment that Padma became Queen of Earth, and though Harry did not hear that until later, he did know that something had happened. He decided to worry about it later. But whatever it was, was powerful and something that he didn't want to have to destroy.

[Enough on my mind right now as it is,] he thought, turning to Lamium. Three Black Tide members, Marauders all, stood by. One was the engineer who ran the catapult the other two were the loading crew. All wore special masks over their faces, the same as what Blaise now wore, showing only their eyes. They resembled the burkhas Muslim women were forced to wear in the Middle East, although no woman there would have a red rune slashed on their burkhas. The rune, another of Cho and her Enchanters' creations, purified the air the wearer breathed. Lamium, being mostly dead anyway because he was a Necromancer, was immune to disease, and Harry was simply too powerful, in the darkest of magics, to be affected. In short, they were now among a very small class of people: those who could leave Hogsmeade alive after the next few minutes.

Harry had done the math for Hogsmeade, and realized that his forces would have serious problems taking the small city. So he opted for a different solution. He wanted an example, and ruling a

captured city would be too hard and binding at the moment. So he was simply going to ruin the city and destroy everything inside of it. He nodded towards the bags floating in the air.

"Get started," he said.

The men unzipped the bag, and grimacing at the hideous and pitiful creature inside, placed him on the catapult's sling. The engineer activated its magic, sitting on a seat to the side. A magic in the seat caused a holographic image of the area the catapult would strike to appear in the air. Where it would hit appeared as a red spot. He began to mentally order it to move, going through the streets of Hogsmeade. He waited for Harry's orders.

"Start at the Three Broomsticks," Harry said in his ear, leaning over him. He wanted to watch what this disease would do. Blaise looked over his shoulder and watched as well wanting to see the terror in the victims.

What came next was going to be fun.

At the Three Broomsticks, Remus Lupin stood outside the door in human form, watching. His hand on his combat wand in the pocket of his robes, he was nervous and very jumpy. He smelled something foul in the air, and couldn't understand what was happening. An enormous barrier of rock, wood, and stone had been raised around Hogsmeade. He hadn't seen much of it, but he'd gotten an idea of great power and strength from whatever was causing this barrier. He sniffed the air, his supernaturally acute senses searching each molecule as it entered his nose. Something was wrong; what?

From far away, his lupine ears heard a whistling noise, and then laughter. The laughter immediately keyed him up; nothing natural laughed like that. He pulled his wand out, facing where he'd heard the sound from. He had enough time to see what was coming before it hit him, but no time to move.

A former student of Beauxbatons, a victim of Ginny's created disease, slammed into Remus. Harry had seen him on the holographic display and immediately thanked Fate. He'd wanted Lupin dead for some time now. He was too much a good man to be corrupted, and powerful. Harry didn't want either trait in anyone who

didn't work for him, and he knew that Lupin could contact many important people among the Aurors and among the werewolf communities.

Besides, the irony of Lupin being killed by the son of one of his best friends, a person he had tried to protect, was too funny to resist for him.

The body, bloated and softened, exploded when it hit Remus, the force of the impact, mostly centered on Remus' face, cracked Remus' skull open. Bones from the unlucky student flew outwards from the impact, scattering into the stunned crowd at the Broomsticks. They flew hard enough to knock several people out, and the skull smashed a window, pieces of rotted and bloated flesh still clinging to it. The flesh and blood, all crawling with death, scattered into the crowd as well. Though they didn't know it then, they were all dead people from that moment on. Several people screamed and fainted. Remus' dying thoughts were almost childish; he reverted to calling his old friends by their nicknames in his death moments. Those had been the best times of his life, then, when he had had such great friends...

[Sorry, Padfoot,] he thought, his eyes closing. [Guess I failed you and didn't live longer than you... and Wormtail, for what it means, I forgive you. You were a weak man, and that's really not an excuse, but... I forgive you. And as for you, Prongs, old friend- sorry it turned out this way. You were a good man, maybe the best of us and I hope to see you soon...]

His last thought, causing a strangely soft smile to appear on his lips as he lay dying on the cobblestones, was this.

[You were the first friends I had, and the best. Maybe we will all meet in Heaven someday... friends for all eternity.]

He died, thinking gentle thoughts of old friendships and pacts, a quick, painless, almost pleasant death. It was one of the few that would occur in Hogsmeade that week.

The second body hit the wall above the door of the Hog's Head two minutes after the first sprayed its load of death and destruction upon the horrified crowd outside the Three Broomsticks. It was an understatement to say it exploded when it hit the stone wall; it was

annihilated, scattering blood, gore, and flesh everywhere. The bartender, the three people inside at the time, and every single person for blocks around became infected by the blast. One witness, a hag who thought she'd seen everything, became violently ill when she saw the body hit and puked up her lunch in a side alley. Later, as the sickness spread, she wished she had kept it in. It was the last full meal she ever had.

A third splashed into a large fountain in Hogsmeade's center, the only bad shot Harry's engineer made that day. He'd fired early, and instead of the satisfying splat of a body hitting stone, it hit the water instead. The engineer, frightened of Harry's wrath, looked at him, but Harry waved it off. Harry was kind and understanding to those who served him, a quality that made him less a leader and more a god to them, and the engineer returned to his job with renewed vigor, wanting to prove his worth to Harry. He made nothing but perfect shots the rest of the day.

The fourth shot also hit water, but this time Harry wanted it to; the water they'd hit was the municipal water supply, a giant pool located near the "back" of the city. The pool flowed into magical aqueducts, which gave the city its drinking water. Broken bits of the body floated down these into the city, and any who drank the water ingested the disease with it.

The fifth and sixth shots both hit important centers and buildings, but the seventh was special. The seventh shot hit Fred and George's new Joke Shop. Fred and George, using the money Harry had given them at the end of the Triwizard Tournament, had hastened plans to build it when Hogwarts was canceled for the year. Neither Fred nor George were inside the building when the body shattered the windows, both were safed from the disease.

The disease had been spread, and now Harry would wait. And watch what it did. Harry briefly left to find out what that power he had felt early was.

Harry, walking back to a Portkey to Gringotts through the streets of Hogsmeade, watching the citizen's horrified reactions to the plague bombing with no small amusement, having sensed a great deal of power from Gringotts, power that felt as heavy as a mountain. He had left Blaise in charge of the forces here. Taking his mind off his

thoughts for a moment, he ran towards the portkey to Gringotts faster than the eye could follow. Of the few surviving accounts of those weeks in Hogsmeade, one mentions a black blur. The writer, a female witch who was barely thirteen that day (she never reached fourteen), wrote in her diary that "a strange black blur passed through my vision this morn. I was walking through the streets, wondering at the strange events that had passed, when I felt a chill on the back of my neck, and a sense of great foreboding and doom crept across me. I turned, and I saw the black blur, the feelings heightened- and then diminished as the blur passed me. I do not know what it was, but it was evil." She died soon afterward, taken by the plague which eventually became known, both in Hogsmeade and the world, as "Hell's Boils," named for the first sign of infection: massive, bleeding boils on the body.

Harry had reached the edge of Hogsmeade and would be to the Portkey to Gringotts soon afterward. He ran up the stone wall, his feet carrying him vertically, and then ran down the side. He grabbed a feather that was lying on the ground and appeared before Gringotts. He was stopped in front of Padma, and for the first time since becoming the Jester, was absolutely stupefied by what he saw. Padma smiled, a soft and royal smile, when she sensed Harry's amazement.

"Harry Potter," she said, her voice low and high, her voice really two, the twin voices of the two beings that now inhabited her body, "I am the Queen of Earth. I send greetings from my King, the Earth itself."

Harry, his confusion lessening as he began to formulate ideas, bowed to her, one arm swept aside and the other across his chest. He never stopped looking at her face as he did it, and stayed bowed as he said, "What greetings does he send?"

"Earth is pleased with you, Harry Potter," Padma said, her voice carrying in the silence of Diagon Alley. Every member of the Black Tide that was present had stopped what they were doing to watch this exchange between the two great beings. "You have done much to overthrow the current world, the rotten and festering thing so much has suffered under. You have risen Earth up high, and my master wishes to reward you."

"How so?" Harry said, still bowed, cocking his head to the side. If it came down to a fight between him and Padma, he knew he could

win- but it would probably disable him for a long time, seeing as only another Jester or a holy warrior could kill him, afterward, just the same. He'd lose a lot of his force, since every Earth Elementalist would fight him and his men. "What reward does Earth wish to give?"

"It's aid," Padma said, and she swept her arm out to indicate the soldiers gathered about them. "Earth honors your forces, and now seeks to honor you. Earth offers its services to you, Harry Potter, Jester King."

Harry smiled under his mask. Looked like he wasn't going to have to fight Padma after all. Harry ducked his head in a proper bow, then straightened up. "I accept your generous offer, Earth."

Padma smiled again, regal as ever. "I myself will retire now," Padma said, her voice her own again since only she was talking, "and commune with my master. I have much to do, Harry Potter. I will return when I am done."

Tendrils of rock, strangely smooth and fluid, came out of the ground at her feet, and began wrapping around her. As the rock closed about her to carry her to a safer place where she could commune in peace, she heard Harry laugh. The sound went with her as she slid down into the darkness. To her it sounded just like a boy's laughter, being that she was on a similar level beyond humanity or mortality.

Chapter 7

He-who-has-no-name you really are a cowardly asshole that has no life. I say this because the very least someone one can do is review with their actual account. That's all I have to say on that matter. Now onto the story.

Part 1

A Soldier's Honor

From the front page of the Daily Prophet, one week after Ron and Hermione's visit to the Wizengamot:

HARRY POTTER IS HEAD OF NEW ARMY, WIZENGAMOT OFFICIALS REPORT

In a completely unexpected turn, the Wizengamot has issued a special declaration involving the destruction of Hogwarts and the hostile takeover of Beauxbatons. The force behind this, previously believed to be former Death Eaters, has been revealed as an army calling itself the "Black Tide". In an even more unexpected turn, the leader of this army is none other than the Boy-Who-Lived, Harry Potter.

"We never expected anything like this," Amelia Susan Bones, the de facto Minister of Magic, said. "It's completely unheard of."

Ministry insiders have told this reporter that in a special convention the Wizengamot held last week, an ambassador from yet another never-before-seen army, one in opposition to the Black Tide and calling itself the "White Shore", entered unexpected and unannounced. One insider, a Wizengamot member who wished to remain anonymous, said that the leaders of this army, an unidentified boy and girl (both in their mid-teens), brought the dead body of one of the Black Tide's soldiers along. The soldier, called a "Marauder" by the White Shore, had been stabbed several times. Apparently, a fierce battle had raged for control of Beauxbatons, one that the White Shore lost. Harry's general, a former student of Hogwarts named Seamus Finnigan and now called the "Black General" by the White Shore, defeated them in battle. This lends credibility to the rumors in France of large armed forces moving throughout the area. All of the surrounding area of Beauxbatons and

Hogwarts has been declared Ministry Free Zones and is now considered as under Black Tide control. Durmstrang and the surrounding area is also now a Free Zone, considered as White Shore territory.

The Black Tide has been declared an enemy of the Ministry, and it is gearing for battle. The military draft is now in full effect, and all male Wizards between 20 and 45 who are able are to take their wands and head to the nearest Auror-recruiting station. This will be the first war since the battle with You-Know-Who ten years ago.

A warning has gone out to all parents of former Beauxbatons and Hogwarts students. The Black Tide is comprised almost entirely of former Hogwarts and Beauxbatons students between ten and eighteen. Despite their age, they are fierce warriors. They have already delved into Necromancy, and all Black Tide members, regardless of age, are to be considered as enemies of the state and captured/killed on sight. Their insignia is a black wave cresting before a dull red sky, set in a rust colored circle on a black background. Parents, beware if your children come home, for they may be Black Tide spies.

The White Shore, also composed of former Beauxbatons and Hogwarts students, has been declared an ally of the Ministry. Their insignia is a white sand beach with blue waves, set in a white circle on a silver background. They are to be helped with anything they need.

Rewards have been offered for these members of the Black Tide, all considered as high-ranking and also extremely dangerous. Information on looks, personality, and distinguishing traits can be found at any Auror recruiting station:

Seamus Finnigan (Eighty Thousand Galleons Alive/Dead) "The Black General"

Ginny Weasley (Seventy-Five Thousand Galleons Alive/Dead) No known nickname

Blaise Zabini (Seventy-Five Thousand Galleons Alive/ Sixty-Thousand Dead) NKN

Neville Longbottom (Seventy-Five Thousand Galleons Alive/ Sixty-Thousand Dead) "Master Elementalist"

Padma Parvati (Seventy-Five Thousand Galleons Alive/ Sixty-Thousand Dead) "Queen of Earth"

Draco Malfoy (Seventy-Two and a half Thousand Galleons Alive/Dead) NKN

Luna Lovegood (Seventy-Two and a half Thousand Galleons Alive/Dead) NKN

Terry Boot (Seventy-Two and a half Thousand Galleons Alive/Dead) NKN

Samual (Seventy-Two and a half Thousand Galleons Dead) "Lord of Misfits"

Cho Chang (Seventy-Two and a half Thousand Galleons Alive/Dead) "Lady of Monstrosity"

Fleur Delacour (Seventy Thousand Galleons Alive/ Sixty-Thousand Dead) NKN

Wedge (Sixty-Five Thousand Alive/ Fifty-Five Thousand dead) apprenticed under Terry Boot. NKN

Richard Spithe (Sixty-Five Thousand Alive/ Fifty-Five Thousand dead) NKN

Alex Vicks (Sixty-Five Thousand Alive/ Fifty-Five Thousand dead) "Secondary General"

The reward for Harry Potter, interestingly enough, applies only if he is dead. Two hundred Thousand Galleons have been offered for his dead body. He is nicknamed the "Jester King"

The Ministry has declared a state of total war. All citizens, be on your guard.

And may the gods help us.

Rita Skeeter

Reporter, Daily Prophet News

After Harry's initial body-flinging assault on Hogsmeade, his army simply stepped back to wait. All they had to do was keep the citizens inside the city. In all the history of mankind, there are no stories as wretched, pathetic, and pitiful as those about the victims of a plague. Every story, from the Middle Ages to the present time, has the same elements to it: the pain and suffering of the victims, the well-intentioned but misguided attempts of others to relieve the victims, and a sad, sober ending in death. At times, other ingredients are added to the recipe- a besieging army, a noble doctor, orphaned children- but the basics remain the same.

Of all these stories, none have ever quite matched the agonizing tale of Hogsmeade.

Hogsmeade, mostly relying on Hogwarts to keep it alive, was much like a Muggle "campus town", save that it was full of Wizards. Due to the size of Hogwarts, it had been a rather large place before, but when Hogwarts was shut down by the Ministry (and subsequently destroyed by Harry), it lost the majority of its business. Many shops closed, but the owners did not always move on. With the Ministry now on full alert to beware of Harry (notices were posted everywhere) and the Black Tide, the entire Wizarding world was in chaos. Several Wizard towns and cities had stopped immigrants from coming in, from fear that they would be Black Tide members. Those from Hogsmeade were completely banned from even more towns. The reasoning was that anybody from a place so close to Harry's power base would be even more likely to be a Black Tide member. Despite Ministry statements that Harry's army was mostly under 21, these towns would not be moved. So, the now penniless former shopkeepers merely stayed in Hogsmeade, begging and trying to scrape out a living in the dirt.

Soon after the Ministry's declaration about the Black Tide, a large number of Ministry soldiers (two companies in all) set up shop in Hogsmeade. The new influx of customers helped the dying economy revive itself, and some who had left Hogsmeade returned to it.

These factors all contributed to making the plague in Hogwarts the worst in history.

The first two days were totally unconcerned with the plague. Most of the citizens were dead (though they did not know it), and so they attempted to escape Hogsmeade. Unfortunately for them, most of the army was concentrated at the gateway, the biggest and most obvious escape route, and they were under strict orders to kill the citizens before they got far enough to infect the soldiers. Every soldier who took up archer duty wore one of Cho's purifying masks, to protect themselves from the disease. Several soldiers, ditching bow and arrow for goblin technology, were seen lugging out Hygars and Splicers in an attempt to figure the guns out. Seamus himself participated, enjoying the feel of his new Bayonet.

One man, the first to die, scaled the wall Padma had created. He reached the top and had time to shout "Oh shit!" before Seamus blew his head off. The white beam of energy instantly vaporized the top half of his face, and his body fell backwards, the lower half of his fleshy jaws still smoking. Screams rang out in the crowd in front of the Three Broomsticks. Women passed out, and three men grabbed their wands and began climbing. One got to the top and was immediately shot dead by an archer, the arrow sticking out of his eye; the second got to the top and fired off a spell (he missed) before a Marauder, testing his new Splicer out, pierced his body with multiple shots; and the third managed to actually stand on the top and fire off a spell (hitting and wounding one Marauder) before being pierced through the heart. His dead body fell forward, hitting the pavement on the Black Tide side of the wall with a thick, meaty splat he was quickly cleaned up so as to not infect anyone. On the Hogsmeade side, more women fainted. Throughout that day, many tried to get past the wall. None made it. Several dead bodies lay limply over the wall, testimony to the power of the Tide.

The second day, the boils began appearing on the first victims. But most of them ignored the boils, thinking it was nothing but a bad rash. They hurt and bled a little, but only one or two had appeared so far, so the victims thought nothing of it. Someone proposed the idea of going through the sewers. The sewer system was where the solid waste was taken- the magical aqueducts carried liquid waste, but no citizen of Hogsmeade wanted to look at the marble aqueducts and see someone's crap literally floating in them. So underground sewers, much like a Muggles, were made, the citizens who entered the sewers soon found themselves facing Neville Longbottom and his Elementalists or Purgers. They had transformed themselves into crocodiles, and when the victims came by they

simply tore them to pieces. Neville himself led the attacks, though his conscience bothered him greatly. No citizen escaped their grasping jaws and none of the Elementalists were harmed by the disease because of Water's powers of purification.

Another group had struck out for the back of the city. They were the worst off; Ginny had stationed her Necromancers there. The group was slaughtered by zombies before they got within a mile of the town's perimeter. They then rose up and began walking their own patrol route, the former victims now soldiers of their killer. Ginny herself flew over Hogsmeade at regular intervals, checking to see how her disease worked. She was rather anticipating the effects. Blaise watched from the walls to see what Ginny's Disease did and the terror of the people.

The third day was the day it really began to effect the citizens. The boils, before only itchy and bleeding, now were openly busting open and spewing forth their contents of blood and pus. The retching began, and the streets were filled with the sounds of puking. The citizen's panicked but energetic attempts to escape were replaced with dull eyed, weakened citizens who attempted to escape slowly, almost as if it were a job and not something they wanted to do. They were all killed. The disease, so far, had killed no one, but that would soon change.

The fourth and fifth days really started the trouble. One side effect of Ginny's plague was that, before the disease robbed the body of health entirely, the victims would go insane. She'd added it to have a little fun, and thought that the next two days would be very, very interesting. She was right. The only new physical problem the citizens suffered was a severe cold, but alongside the cold was a burning heat in their minds. Blaise just watched the terror that helped her go to sleep at night.

The members of a Knockturn Alley potion shop who had gotten away before it was destroyed, sure that a rival had started the plague, decided to kill him. The potion workers began creating a potion to burn him alive, but one of them (hacking and coughing) added the wrong ingredient. The result was a gout of flame visible for miles. Most of that part of Hogsmeade was destroyed, either immediately by the explosion or later by the fires that resulted. Ginny, flying above them, found it hilarious. One old woman, too weak to move, was left behind by her family as the fire encroached upon her.

She stared at it, watching the flames come closer, until her eyes were burned out of her face. Several other explosions rocked Hogsmeade as other potion shops went up in flames. Many people perished in the flames. Blaise started laughing as soon as she saw it and requested that Harry come as well so that he could gain from their madness, something that he was particular powerful with and was like a fear-mage with. Harry arrived in time to see some of the madness and feed from it.

A Ministry soldier, the madness gripping him, slaughtered his commander and most of his superiors with his hatchet as they slept that morning. The Ministry's army headquarters in Hogsmeade, not having been used for ten years, was a broken down, trashy place. The commander had ordered the soldier to sleep in a room that was in such poor condition that the floor was always threatening to drop out. The soldier had stepped into the bathroom that morning, and tripped over a jutting board. The madness immediately stepped in, and he decided that the commander and his superiors were doing this on purpose, giving him such a shitty room.

[The bastards,] he thought savagely, grabbing his hatchet. [I'll show them. I'll rend them apart!]

He had gone into his commander's room, took one look at the sleeping officer, and hacked twice down, hard, on his sleeping face. The twin blows sheared his brain connections, and he jerked only once before laying still. The soldier, looking at the bloody hatchet and grinning maniacally, a grin Harry was very, very familiar with, seeing as how it was on his face at times as well, had proceeded to chop up four of his other superiors, effectively eliminating the high command, before his sickened brain caused him to chop up the magical communications equipment (one of his superiors had owned and operated it, giving him enough reason to go after it). The comm. device (which was a crystal ball) shattered when he struck it, and two pieces went in his eyes. He screamed and jerked about until one of his fellow soldiers, seeing the bloody hatchet in his hand, had killed him with a spell. The city was now cut off from the world- the crystal ball had been the only piece of magical comm. equipment in the city, and all owls leaving the city were killed by Black Tide archers. No help would come from outside.

The last major event, one that pleased Ginny to no end, was the destruction and collapse of the entire municipal water supply. On the

fifth day of the plague, a person walked up to the enormous, magically supported water pool. It hung there, floating in the air above the ground, seemingly supported by nothing (invisible walls held it up- it allowed the water checkers to see inside the tank and made for a beautiful sight for tourists), silently flowing into the aqueducts suspended on their marble columns. George, as the man was call whom had been growing sicker day by day, had lost his mind when he had reach the five day. He'd brooded in his shop, and in his madness he decided to put out the fires that had killed his partner. To do this, he was going to open the invisible barriers holding up the municipal water supply. In his hand he held the magic rune key that operated the barriers. He'd gotten it from the dead body of its previous owner. When the man had refused to give it to him, George had simply strangled him and taken it.

Standing before the water supply, George raised the rune key. Shouting, "For you, Friend!" he threw it to the ground as hard as he could. It broke, and the barriers vanished instantly. The water hit the ground, released from its prison, and George's last thought arrived right before the water did. The flood smashed into him and shattered every bone in his body, crushing him into nothingness. The flood didn't wipe out the fires in all of Hogsmeade, however. Hogsmeade was built on a slight slope, and the slope carried the water away from where the fires were at. It destroyed the Hogs Head on its way, and the weight of the water broke the already weakened foundations of the streets (Padma's earthquake hadn't physically hurt Hogsmeade's surface, but it had weakened anything underground). The water cracked them wide open, and joined with the sewer water to create a floodtide of garbage and filth. Neville and his Elementalists, warned by Ginny beforehand, observed this from a safe distance. The water destroyed almost everything in its way, knocking down buildings, people, and animals, and in the end created a huge, impassable river of sewage that blocked off the last escape routes from the city. Now, what was left of the dying citizens of Hogsmeade were trapped between a stone wall and the Tide on one side, a fire by the other, and a lake on the last side, triangling them inside. Only a person of extraordinary strength and will could have escaped. No person like that was still alive in Hogsmeade. The citizens could do nothing but wait in the ruins of their homes. Wait... and die.

The sixth day was when the madness ebbed and the disease entered the final stages. Diarrhea and extreme physical debilitation

became common. Most of the citizens couldn't walk, and stayed where they were, still puking and suffering extreme diarrhea as well. Their bodies were essentially emptied of all vital nutrients, starving to death slowly. Their eyes were coated in a milky substance, a by-product of the bacteria which was killing them. They lost their sight that day, and lay on their beds, screaming in pain. Blaise gained lots of power from simple being on the wall, feeding her magic with the fear, terror and pain.

The seventh day (the last day for most of them), the body began to swell up. The disease's bacteria began to explode inside the body, releasing millions of other bacteria, which in turn exploded as well. The result was a massive build-up of air and mass in the body which caused them to bloat and swell up, like drowned bodies in a river. In some cases, the bloating was so severe they ruptured, and several people popped like overfull balloons. Unlike balloons, however, organs and blood sprayed out when they popped, instead of harmless air. Those that lived (very few now) were too tired to even scream. The bloated tissues began to rot as the newly created bacteria began to poison the flesh, turning it black and sullen. Blaise lost what remained of her humanity that day from all the power, such dark power, being added to her reserves of magic for an entire week. She was beyond humanity but not mortality as Padma or Harry.

The Black Tide, deciding it was time to retreat, headed back to Oceania via the Portkeys. They'd lost some men, but they'd completely annihilated Diagon Alley, Knockturn Alley and Hogsmeade. And, with the gold and other treasures looted from Gringotts, and the home/shops of the dead, they were more powerful than ever. The three remaining Elemental Orbs were taken to the half-completed Jester's Keep for safe-keeping. Ginny stayed behind, wanting to see how long it would take the victims to die. She remained for only a day. The last victim, a tough and strong young Wizard who had refused to die until the very end, expired the night after the Tide had left. She landed, looked at his corpse, and smiled. Mentally congratulating herself that her disease worked perfectly, she flew off, heading towards Oceania. She had been given the task to destroy the Portkeys, and had done so perfectly. None remained.

All that was left in Hogsmeade were the corpses of the dead. But even in that, something had been taken. Not a single Black Tide member's body lay in Hogsmeade. They'd been taken away by Ginny's Necromancers.

A week later.

Ginny's foresight in taking the bodies of the Black Tide away had paid off. The Ministry was completely shaken. They thought that the Black Tide had managed to destroy all of Hogsmeade and Diagon Alley without a single loss of life. The Ministry had found out about Hogsmeade's destruction when a third Auror company, sent to trade places with one of those already in Hogsmeade, arrived and saw the lake, still there two days after the plague had ended. When they managed to cross it, they saw the horrific destruction and immediately called Auror headquarters. The Daily Prophet had come as well, and Ron and Hermione had visited Hogsmeade too. They were safe from the plague; it was a short-lived plague on purpose, for Harry wished to rule the world, not poison it and kill it off. Hence, the plague lasted only a few hours after its hosts died. No one outside Hogsmeade was affected. The Daily Prophet had several articles calling it the most "heinous assault in history." After deciding Harry was behind it ("Who else could it be?" Rita Skeeter wondered in print in the Daily Prophet. "You-Know-Who?"), the bounty on the heads of the Black Tide members was doubled and, in Harry's case, tripled. Harry found it funny and had it tacked to the wall of the hall in the Jester's Keep, which had been completed. Padma had returned, and had her own special building made entirely out of stone. She'd made it in the space of an hour. The Earth Elementalists resided inside it as well, and the Orb of Earth remained with Padma, glowing dark green on Padma's wrist.

Harry and his men had been celebrating the victory, and ended the week-long celebration with a banquet. Neville had been brooding all week, and during the banquet he left. Harry watched him go with something very akin to amused curiosity. He had thought Neville would assault him by now, and was wondering if he was going to go gather up his guts to do it. If he came back, he'd ruin the banquet, but it would be nice to have a chance to exercise. Killing was so much fun. Killing with the help of Blaise was one of the only things that made it more fun.

Harry was very close; Neville was trying to decide whether to continue as he was or try to stop Harry. He knew he didn't have a chance in hell of killing Harry, but he thought he could wreck some serious havoc with the internal support system for the Tide. But, he didn't know if he wanted to.

His thoughts were interrupted by the voice of Water, flowing out from the room the Orbs stayed in. Fire, Earth's natural ally, had been talking with it's Elementalists (though it had not chosen a King or Queen- it was afraid Earth would take offense and attack it) for some time, and Air had been humble towards all (it was scared to death of Earth's new power and madness)- but Water had remained silent.

NEVILLE LONGBOTTOM.

He turned to look in its direction. Considering calling it "Master" and deciding not to, he talked with the Orb as an equal.

"Yes?" he said, alone in the passage. It seemed that he was talking to himself; only he could hear Water.

COME INTO MY ROOM.

Neville walked towards the room, rounding the completed stone corridors of the castle. The guards of the Elemental Orb room saw him coming and let him through. He nodded to them in passing, almost unconsciously, to show them he acknowledged their presence. He did not know how far the trappings of power had penetrated him, but they had. They had penetrated very deeply indeed.

Inside, the Orb of Water glowed. The wall's were bare stone with torches set in them, and a single red carpet embroidered with gold leading from the door to the center of the room coated the floor. The middle of the room was raised, and on three pedestals standing there lay the Orbs of the Elements. Fire was in the middle, glowing a cheery red, like a campfire. Air, glowing a dull white that was almost unnoticeable, lay to Neville's right. On the left Water, shining a deep blue like the sea, lay on its marble pedestal. It spoke again.

NEVILLE LONGBOTTOM. YOU HAVE SERVED HARRY OUT OF REGARD FOR YOUR OATH, AND I KNOW YOU ARE A LOYAL, HONORABLE MAN. BUT, IS YOUR OATH REALLY SO IMPORTANT THAT YOU MUST SERVE SUCH A DARK, DESPICABLE MAN FOR IT? IS IT REALLY WORTH IT?

And then, Neville made a choice. Before the Orb even asked, he made a choice that would forever change the world.

* I WILL GRANT YOU MY POWER, THE POWER OF THE OCEANS. WITH IT, DESTROY OCEANIA. YOU WILL NOT BE ABLE TO KILL HARRY, BUT YOU CAN DESTROY HIS POWER. DESTROY IT... REDEEM YOURSELF.*

"No."

The Orb, believing that Neville would agree with it, was shocked by this into silence. Neville kept going, the words spilling out faster and faster, as everything became clear to him.

"No, I will not go against Harry Potter. He was my friend before this. He is my friend now. And, as you said, I am a loyal, honorable man. But you know what? I found out something about myself. Something that I can be proud of here, in the Black Tide, something I found out when I became what I am now."

"All that's in me, when you get right down to it, is a will for power. What I didn't have before but have now. You know what? I think Fate planned on something very, very different. I think Fate wanted me to be a weak, snivelling thing my whole life." He swept his arm out and turned slowly in a circle, hand indicating the castle all around. "And I've beaten it. Look at me now, head of the Elementalists. I sit at the heads of tables holding the most powerful people I've ever known. I've fought on battlefields and proved my worth. I've trained others, and all respect me." He stepped forward then, facing the crystal, and his voice raised. The guards outside, hearing him, stepped in but were stopped. Power was starting to flow all around Neville as he continued talking, his voice rising to a shout. "I will not be a weak thing. If this is my truth, if power is all I want, then I take it with both hands!" Here he grabbed the Orb of Water, his two hands clenching it tightly. Power erupted all around him, blue power that he absorbed, power that glowed brighter and brigher. "I take that strength! It is my will, and my will shapes my own destiny! THIS IS MY TRUTH!" This last was shouted.

And blue power flared.

Two days after banquet at Oceania. A remote location in England.

In England, in a small and almost unnoticeable street, there is a house. That house, although seeming to be just like all others, is actually a fortress that is nearly impregnable. A fortress... that Voldemort had built.

Inside this house, which seems to be one story tall on the outside and is actually four stories tall on the inside, Voldemort sat in his library. Books of secrets dark and deep lined the walls. The room was painted black, and lit by a single candle. Voldemort sat at a desk of ash wood, and the candle burned gloomily before him. No window looked upon the world from this room of darkness.

Voldemort looked down once more at the paper. Although the Daily Prophet would be horrified to know it, Voldemort was an avid subscriber, under the false name "Tomas Ridel", a perversion of his birth name (he found it funny). He always read the newspaper; the Daily Prophet was run by a pack of fools, and they often told things that should have been left unsaid. But this newspaper- one he had read three times already- was different.

"Hogsmeade wiped out," Voldemort read, mumbling under his breath. "Black Tide responsible." The article continued onwards to a sentence that he kept reading, one that said, "A strange and somewhat terrifying thing is the fact that no bodies of Black Tide members have been found." And past that, one even worse in its implications, "This has led many to believe that they lost not one soldier in the battle."

He shook his head. He wasn't scared, he was Voldemort, after all, and nothing could stand against him or so he thought, but he was worried. A group capable of laying low Hogsmeade without one fatality was a mighty force indeed. They might delay his plans. He stood up from his chair.

"Wormtail!" he called. Wormtail was a snivelling little bastard in Voldemort's opinion, but he was loyal. Wormtail ran into the room, breathe puffing. His tongue hang out as he said, "Yes, my Master?"

Voldemort, standing up, said, "Call together my forces. Just one company- I don't want to gather too many at once. We're making our move."

Wormtail nodded at his master. Eagerness shown in his face- he'd been waiting for this moment for too long, it seemed.

The moment Voldemort took the throne.

Oceania, same day.

His eyes blazing with blue power, the subject of many conversations at the Laughing Mug walked down the street. His blue robes trailed behind him. And on his forehead, trapped by Neville's hunger, the Orb of Water pulsed. Thin veins of flesh covered it; it had grown to become part of him.

That day, which to Neville was an eternity ago but was really only two days, Neville had grasped the Orb of Water. It had tried to destroy him, literally flooding his mind with power in an attempt to overload him. But he had absorbed it, absorbed it all. He hungered for it, nursed at it like a babe, and in the end even Water's power was finite before that hunger. He had trapped it, trapped it with his greed for power. Now, he was a special thing, a thing not seen before on this world, not a King or Queen of the Elements, but a Master, a Ruler of his element. Padma was her element's symbiote, and could use most of Earth's power, but only Neville could truly tap all the powers of his element. And why not? For it was now a part of him, a part that always fought, but never won. The night he gained it was quickly becoming a legend in Oceania, and the two guards continued to tell their story (and get free drinks for it).

The guards outside the room had been paralyzed by the blue force flowing about Neville, and had stood still, shocked and gaping, when the power flowed into him. The orb had lifted out of his hands and struck his forehead, where his skin grew about it. His body had changed, then, the force of the power inside him making it grow and shift. One of the guards, a man named Kyle, had said that Neville seemed to shift into something... different. He was an unlearned man, and was never able to describe quite what Neville had done. But, if he had known them, he would have said that Neville became more, became deeper and darker and fell through the pitiful dream we think of as reality to BECOME. But, he was never able to put it in words, and fell into a depression later, being unable to make others understand what he had seen.

The shift lasted a mere second, and then the power stopped. Harry, who had sensed the burst, had run past the banquet tables in a flash. Stopping in the doorway, he looked at Neville and stood amazed. He briefly remembered that Neville had once been a weak, bumbling person who was best described as "Pathetic." Could that same person be before him? Neville stood now, wearing robes of the deepest blue, and on his hands cuffs of pearl entwined with gold. His tunic was black, as the abyss of the oceans is black, and it was inlaid with sapphire like stones. He was grinning, a grin that instantly reminded Harry of him self, and his eyes flashed with blue. He was panting, and sweat dropped across his forehead. It ran across the Orb of Water, glowing there. Neville saw him enter, and his grin spread even farther, seeming to touch his ears. To Harry, it was the grin of a jackal after feasting.

"Hello, my Liege. Sorry to... interrupt the banquet... but I had... business to attend to," Neville said, gasping between bursts of words.

"Neville?" Harry said, wondering what in the hells had just happened. "What... has happened?" His mind, a tool that was now geared for cunning, began immediately forming plans. "Have you merged with the Orb of Water?"

Neville nodded, the grin never leaving his face. "To better serve you... Harry Potter. The Orb thought... it would make trouble. I decided to stop it... and gain its power as well." He bowed to Harry, sinking to one knee on the floor. "My King."

Harry, relieved that Neville wasn't going to fight him, they were still good friends, oddly enough even when Neville had doubted him, made a bow to him as he had to Padma, although now he ducked his head properly the first time. "Arise, Neville."

The Black Tide soldiers, just arriving from the banquet, stood staring at Neville as he walked out. They stared at the Orb on his forehead, and seeing them gape Neville laughed.

"Ah yes, things will change! Things have changed. Let us eat, Harry-I'm starving."

And so saying, he and Harry had put their arms on each other's shoulders and walked back towards the banquet. Harry had laughed, and Neville laughed with him.

[Why did it ever bother me before?] Neville wondered as they walked back. [That laugh is nothing.]

He did not realize that he and Harry sounded the same when they laughed. Harry thought of Blaise and that she would soon need someone to teach her how to use her beyond humanity powers, and the possibility of making her a Jester crossed his mind.

The Water Elementalists, hearing Water's agonized cries (many of which consisted of "No! How can this be?" and things of that nature), were initially torn between saving it and serving Harry. Seamus, sensing trouble, won them over with a simple argument: was it Water or Harry Potter that had given them power? They elected to serve Harry. To prevent future problems, Neville eventually asked Cho to make a ring for him that would shut Water up. He (literally) had voices in his head, and would like them to stop. She was happy to oblige. On his hands he now had a ring of pearl with a black rune slashed on it. The rune was the magical equivalent of a gag; Water couldn't even whimper as long as Neville had it. This cheered him up greatly.

Today Neville was taking a company of Black Tide soldiers to Lunas. Lunas had recently been threatened by Ministry forces, and Neville was going to reinforce them. Besides, Lunas was situated near a beautiful lake. What better place to test his powers?

On his way to the front gates which had been rebuilt; the formerly rickety-but-serviceable wooden towers were now of stone from the Boneyard at Lunas, which had ended up becoming the de facto mining operation of the Tide, Neville saw Seamus and Ginny talking. The two had become rather good friends, which many people (Neville included) found strange. The Black General and Necromancer were currently standing at the base of one of the towers. Seamus was leaning against it, and Ginny was standing before him, her wings swept behind her. As he approached the meeting place of his company (they were already outside, waiting for him), he caught a snatch of their conversation.

Ginny said, "Hm. So how does he propose to find him?"

Seamus shrugged, and said, "Don't know. But it's Harry. I doubt that there's a whole hell of a lot he can't do."

Ginny chuckled at that, a normal chuckle for once. "No kidding. Just look around us... I don't think anyone else could have pulled this off."

Seamus nodded, then chuckled. Just before Neville was out of earshot, he heard Seamus say something that made him smile.

"I don't think anyone else would have been crazy enough." Neville silently agreed.

Voldemort would not have been too happy to know it, but Harry was actively looking for him. Harry wanted him dead for many reasons; there was, of course, the old revenge he'd had in mind for some time now (which, for obvious reasons, was no longer as important to him), but he also didn't want his forces split up between three enemies. Two was enough at the moment.

Harry possessed the ability to find the darkness in people's souls; being one of the darkest souls now on the planet, it was familiar to him, even comforting. He never really knew why he could, just as a shark doesn't know why it can smell blood from miles off; it just does. When searching, Harry would sit in his chair (an exceptionally comfy throne he'd created; no reason to suffer in one of those straight-backed nightmares), put his fingers in a "steeple", and close his physical eyes. When he did, he concentrated, and in his mind he saw the world in hues of gray. Whenever he saw a living being with a soul, he saw how evil they were; good souls shone with white, while dark souls throbbed with ebony. He could move this eye with sheer force of will, but it generally sought out the darkest souls in the area on its own. He had a lot of trouble at first with Ginny, Neville, Blaise, Luna, and Draco; the eye wanted to do nothing but stare at them. They was black, almost through and through, so the eye automatically sought one of them. He eventually learned to wrench it away from them, and sent it around England, questing for Voldemort.

Voldemort being next to the darkest soul on the planet (Harry and Ginny having pasted him by now), Harry had thought it would be simple to find him. While Voldemort was in his fortress, however, Harry had been thwarted. The magical wards prevented even his searching eye from looking within. Voldemort's own eagerness to

fight would destroy him in the end. The second he left, Harry's eye opened and saw him. And in the Jester's Keep, miles away, Harry grinned. He continued watching Voldemort, noting his location. As invisible as wind, he followed.

Voldemort and Wormtail left Voldemort's fortress soon after Wormtail had returned from the summoning. Voldemort sensed a presence behind them, but he stopped to check with his powers and found nothing (Harry had seen this coming and flown the eye below Voldemort, into the ground. A simple trick, but effective nonetheless—the eye was insubstantial and invisible to normal sight). Judging it bad nerves, he continued following Wormtail, who had stood nearby, wringing his hands. His new hand, which no longer glowed as it did when he had received it, was doing most of the wringing on his normal hand. He was half-afraid it would fall off if he wrung it. Voldemort turned, and without explaining his sudden stop to his servant, continued on. Wormtail followed, even his steps seeming to verge on cringing. Harry felt sudden distaste for Voldemort. Pathetic, if this was how Voldemort's servants acted around him it would be too easy to disrupt them. Harry was evil, but had his own honor; he never betrayed his servants if they stood by him. They trusted and honored him. Nothing built on fear ever stood for long.

Voldemort continued on, until he reached a small park. In the middle, mostly screened by a grove of trees, a group of Death Eaters stood. Harry moved his eye over to them. They were talking in low voices. Harry was amused by the range of their chatter; they were clearly scared shitless of Voldemort. One wondered aloud if Voldemort was going to kill them. Several shivered and looked ready to run. Harry wished his eye included telepathy; a single well-placed laugh and they'd all be running for their lives. His original fears about Voldemort dissipated; this would be far easier than he thought. He might have been hot stuff ten years ago, but Harry kicked his ass once and would do it again. Moving his eye to a safe perch in a nearby tree, he watched the proceedings below.

Voldemort entered the circle. They gazed at him, and dropped to one knee, each saying "Master" to him. Harry, even more amused at this, privately wondered if Voldemort wanted them to kiss his shoe as well. The cocky bastard had an ego larger than Gringotts, vaults included.

Nodding to them, he said in his slithering voice, one that didn't bother Harry at all, being that his own was darker and more evil, "Excellent. You've all come. Now, Beatrice," he turned to one of the female Death Eaters, one who looked very scared at the attention, "what news from our forces?"

She nodded at him, then tried to speak. She cleared her throat several times (during which Harry privately heckled her in his thoughts- this was ridiculous to him) and then managed, "Fine, Dark Lord. We have thirty dementors, a tribe of giants, two tribes of trolls, a raiding party of orcs, and various assorted monsters. We also have five hundred Death Eaters at the ready."

Voldemort nodded, while Harry gaped in disbelief. Five hundred? So few? Hell, he could wipe out the entire group with half of his forces. The monsters might be a problem, and the "assorted monsters" comment was worrisome, but not much. What could possibly make up the difference in sheer size?

Voldemort said, as Harry shook his head in wonder that this man had once brought the Wizarding World to its knees, "That's not enough. (Harry wholeheartedly agreed.) Gather together twice as many- both in Wizards and monsters- within a month. I want them for an assault I'm planning."

Beatrice nodded to him, then said, "Where, my lord? We don't know where their at..."

Voldemort laughed. "You may not, but I do. They are in the Black Forest. I found them with my magics- an area where reality bends. Where much evil is contained in one soul, or many souls as is the case now. He's much like me now." He laughed. "We will assault them at their home. We will destroy them there."

Harry, snorting to himself as he retracted his eye and closed it, thought not. He laughed as he reentered the Jester's Keep.

Voldemort turned, ignoring one of his servant's comments on how it would be impossible to find more servants in a month's time. He thought he'd heard something- laughter in the darkness. But no, he shook his head and dismissed it. Nerves, that was all.

But still, that night, he wondered. He also briefly considered forcing control through the mark to increase the wizarding forces.

Forest of Spears

There are almost as many ways to wage war as there are people in this world. Seamus Finnigan wanted to try them all out. He had fallen in love with war, with strategy. The woods of the Black Forest were his favorite place to try out new strategies. He had virtually eliminated all of the centaur (a few bands still existed, but nowhere near enough to threaten even small companies in the woods), and even Aragog's hordes had declined from his efforts. He knew the woods like the back of his hand. This was very bad for Voldemort.

When Harry had returned from viewing Voldemort, he'd called Seamus to him. When he got there, Harry had told of what he'd seen. Seamus had smiled, and told Harry to leave it to him. He'd then asked if he could borrow Ginny's services for a while. Harry had agreed and sent a message to Lunas, Lunas and Oceania had set up Portkeys to each other, making travel relatively simple, Ginny had come, leaving Lamium to run the Boneyard while she was gone. She, Draco, Terry, and Seamus began planning immediately. They wanted to be ready when Voldemort came.

Ready... and waiting.

Voldemort's Fortress. 25 days after meeting.

Voldemort looked at the orb on his desk, mentally commanding it to show the date. It was May 28, almost June. He privately fumed. He'd hoped to rid himself of Harry before June, but the incompetent fools who worked for him had managed to mess it up again. He sighed, then sat down in his chair in the library. No, that wasn't entirely fair. It wasn't just his servant's fault. It was partly his own.

He rubbed his temples with his fingers, an old habit he had inherited from his Muggle father (he did not know this). Damn. He'd never expected that day, so long ago, to cost him this much. In front of his servants, he swore revenge on those who did not return to him, but in private he worried. So few had come back...

He ran the numbers off in his head. His current forces, all counted, numbered 6 companies, each consisting of 3 battalions, each battalion consisted of at least a thousand Death Eaters, and various other creatures and monsters. He could only guess how large

Harry's force was. Guessing from the spiritual flow and ebb from Oceania, he guessed that Harry had about half as many men as he did (which was close; Harry's active force in Oceania numbered eight thousand, almost half of Voldemort's 18,000 or so. The other seven (because his forces and people did grow) thousand troops were in Lunas at the moment with Neville, Luna, Cho, and Spithe). He had changed his original plan to include two companies instead of one. He didn't think he'd have any trouble. Harry's army had no idea he was coming, he thought, and with surprise on his side the size difference wouldn't matter. They'd be dead before they knew it.

Voldemort took a deep, calming breath, leaned back, and began to drift off in his chair. Ah, yes. He just needed some sleep; no teenager, regardless of luck, would defeat him.

Voldemort himself was not going. Instead, Crabbe and Goyle would lead. Both were stupid, but able to do whatever they were told. The plan was simple: Kill everyone in Oceania. Surprise would win the day for them, which was exactly what Seamus and Ginny thought as well.

The next day, two days before Voldemort's assault.

In all of warfare, there are two primary advantages which, when put together or used separately, comprise the most effective of all tactics. The first, and less strategic, method is to simply have greater numbers. The second and even greater of these primary advantages is surprise. Seamus and Ginny had both. They also had many other advantages- time, preparation, knowledge of the area- but these two were the most important.

Harry and Seamus, using Harry's eye and Seamus' brain, managed to come up with three possible entries for Voldemort. One was a route from Hogwarts, one from the south, and the last from the opposite end of the Forest from Hogwarts, which bordered a Wizard town called Firion's Gate. Firion's Gate had been friendly towards the Tide, and this led to Harry and Seamus devising a plan.

Seamus dispatched three squads in the weeks following his and Harry's first meeting- two to destroy the paths from Hogwarts and the one at Firion's Gate, while the third began constructing traps and hidden ambush points on the southern end Draco also went to plant

some monsters under the third path. Meanwhile, Blaise had gone to Firion's Gate to meet with the Mayor.

When she had arrived, the townspeople of Firion's Gate looked at her, and then went on their business. A small Wizarding town that had started as a stopping place for workers on the Hogwarts Express, it had been mostly passed over as a campus town when free trips to Hogsmeade became the fashion of the school. With most of the townspeople still resentful of this fact, they'd rather applauded Hogwarts' destruction (if silently), and had accepted the Black Tide. They'd heard of the atrocities in Hogsmeade, and the sour heart of the town had applauded this poetic justice too. Sentiment for the Tide had been rising for some time.

Blaise entered the office of the Mayor, a relatively young man, early thirties at the most, with a long, drooping mustache of sandy, almost blond, brown hair. He had far less hair on the top of his head, although his thick eyebrows (which usually stayed bunched up, due to the man's temperament) apparently were trying to make up for the shiny scalp above them. When Blaise entered, the Mayor had stood up and shaken her hand, while asking if he could call her Blaise. Blaise desperately attempted to remember the Mayor's name for most of this time since it was only her second time meeting him and she hadn't taken the time to memorize it. The Mayor then told her to sit down. Blaise sat in a large comfortable looking chair that was a crimson color in front, while the Mayor, whose name Blaise suddenly remembered: [Cameron,] she thought, [that's his name,] sat in his own big, plush swivel chair.

"Well, Blaise- you don't mind me calling you that do you?" he asked for the third time since she had walked in. Blaise could tell that he was feeling nervous and slightly afraid and that the happiness was only a mask.

Briefly considering telling him hell yes and to call her Ms. Zabini, she reminded herself why she here, Blaise said, "No, that's fine." Blaise felt that he was slightly relieved.

"Well then, Blaise, what does the Black Tide want with our little town of Firion's Gate?" Cameron's mustache twitched as he talked. She saw it as slightly annoying. It was also apparently a nervous habit because she could feel his nervousness.

Blaise switching to her persuasive tone and started manipulating his emotions with her empathy said, "Why, to help you achieve your dreams."

Cameron, his moustache twitching, said, "Yes, How?" He suddenly seemed nervous, jumpy, even. Blaise had just felt his nervousness Skyrocket as had his fear, and his excitement.

Blaise looked towards a nearby window. The view was pretty- blue skies, white clouds. The sounds of laughing children and a generally peaceful village floated in on the breeze. She really disliked it. It was quite literally the exact opposite of what her powers revolved around. She would have preferred crimson skies with black storm clouds, and the sound of screaming and general madness and chaos.

"This town," Blaise began, using a pre-planned, rehearsed speech she had devised to influence small towns, she also began calming him with her empathy "deserves better. You are good people, deserving of more than the Ministry can give. But not more," and here he looked back at Cameron, whose twitch was getting worse, "than what the Tide can give you." She felt his calm all the way down and his fear and excitement were all that she didn't touch.

Cameron nodded at Blaise. He'd known this would come. Ever since Firion's Gate had aligned itself with the Tide, even if unofficially, he'd known that at some point the Tide would approach them with an offer to join. Which was why, in what was the most brilliant flash of foresight he'd ever had, he'd bribed city council members into getting a bill ready that would make Firion's Gate part of the Tide. He had it ready and willing to go at any time. Most of the legislature would sign it, and Cameron hoped to make himself a wealthy man in doing so.

"I know what you're saying," Cameron said, and he smiled. "And I agree. I think the city legislature will join, too."

Blaise nodded. "But, there is another concern that may make you wish to hurry. From what Seamus 'The Black General' as the White Shore calls him, he has told me about this so that I may warn you."

Cameron stopped dead in his tracks. "What?" he said, attempting cheerfulness and failing. Blaise felt his fear increase by quite a bit.

Blaise, using her I'm-here-to-deliver-some-bad-news voice, as she called it, whether that bad news was an assassination on the one she was speaking to or not was not relevant at this time, and sounding really saddened, said "Voldemort is moving. And he's going to try and attack Firion's Gate. We'll divert them, in honor of our position as allies- but we might not do so in the future if Firion's Gate won't repay the favor."

She stood up, and the look on Cameron's face was all he needed to know. She smiled to herself. She knew what he would tell Harry when she arrived back at the Jester's Keep. Maybe she could get him to start training her. Cameron, who would live to see Firion's Gate become a huge city, walked towards the Town Hall and rung the meeting bell as soon as Blaise was out of earshot, calling in a special meeting of legislators.

Firion's Gate, the third town of what was rapidly becoming Harry's empire, had just signed itself over.

From the Office of the Recorder, Firion's Gate Bill No. 45580:

"From this moment forward, the legislature of Firion's Gate, with the full accordance of its citizens, declares itself independent from the European Ministry Of Magic, and now a part of the Black Tide. We recognize Harry Potter, the Jester King, as our leader now and forever."

Firion's Gate hadn't exactly been lied too, just not told all of the truth. Seamus and his men had already determined that Voldemort would not go through that route. Voldemort chose the south route for a simple reason. The others had been completely demolished by Seamus' sapper squads. Voldemort wasn't very worried. He'd thought Harry would smash the roads. He didn't know that Harry had destroyed them in anticipation of him; Voldemort had simply figured that Harry wouldn't want too many routes to his city open. So Voldemort sent his forces down the south road, one that had just recently been named Joker's Way, in honor of Harry.

Unbeknownst to him, Seamus and Ginny had prepared something very special for him on this road.

June 1, an hour after sunrise.

Crabbe and Goyle, large and brutish forms, marched down the dirt path. Their feet hurt, but they knew better than to complain. Service in the name of the Dark Lord demanded nothing less than everything you had. Behind them, also hurting but also knowing not to complain, six thousand Death Eaters, two tribes of orcs (roughly a hundred), three tribes of trolls (roughly sixty- trolls didn't live in large groups because they have a tendency to kill one another), and several rare, magical, and very dangerous monsters stomped off down the path. Although the tired warriors didn't notice, the path was steadily getting narrower. A less tired, less harried group might have noticed, but Crabbe and Goyle had set a monstrous pace. Every soldier was tired. They'd been woken up after walking half the night, kicked out of tents and yelled at to start packing. They'd been rolling since an hour before dawn. Crabbe and Goyle thought they were doing a wonderful job. Had Voldemort been there, he would have ripped them to shreds and fed them to his pet snake. His army was too wearied to fight as well as before, which worked in Seamus' favor.

The path eventually narrowed to where only three could pass, shoulder to shoulder, at a time. The army began squeezing through. Some of the larger creatures had to go in one at a time. They pushed through, barely squeezing in.

One creature, a gigantic beast called a Helene, attempted to squeeze in. This massive beast resembled a turtle without the shell, and sported multiple horns on its wrinkled blue hide. Its face, which resembled nothing except a Tyrannosaurus Rex, sported sharp teeth and beady black eyes. Its teeth gnashed and its spiked tail swung as it attempted to squeeze in the pass. That was when a Splicer round, perfectly aimed, blew into its small brain cavity and killed it. The monstrous creature, body sagging in death, slumped down and blocked the passage. Voldemort's dazed forces were split in half. And the killing started.

Seamus' men had hidden on both sides of the narrow passage they'd made. This "chokepoint", as it was called in strategy, effectively halved what they'd have to fight. Two groups of three thousand Death Eaters faced off on each side with four thousand each of the Black Tide. As the stunned Death Eaters gazed at the massive blue wall that prevented them from reaching each other,

bony hands shot out of the ground. Ginny and her necromancers had buried hundreds of skeletal hands in the ground, and now they brought them to life. Their clutching hands disrupted the frightened Death Eaters even more. As they fought to remove the clutching hands, Seamus and his men opened fire. Draco, who was now in sight on top of a Drake, also let loose the nest of Ankhlegs that lived under the road. They came charged upward, and then grabbed the closest victim and going back down, eating them and then downing it again. Blaise concentrated on focusing the energy that she had collected from the massacre of Hogsmeade and let loose a ball of that concentrated energy. It exploded on contact with the poor fucker that it hit, that caused five others to die and it vaporized him. Seamus himself killed Crabbe, alongside three other Death Eaters, when he fired his Bayonet. The white-hot pulse of the Eclipse bullets it fired vaporized most of Crabbe, and his smoking form hit the ground. Goyle, seeing Crabbe's dead body, or what remained of it at least, made a run for it, he didn't get very far before an arrow struck him in the back of the head, dropping him instantly. Blaise picked up another arrow before concentrating her energies into the tip. A Nundu, which looked like a giant cat with some wicked claws and teeth, came charging right past her and latched onto an orc's throat, after tearing it out and spitting it out, the nundu let out a breath of poison ridden breath at the Death eaters and their monsters. It killed some of the Death Eaters and their monsters.

In the thick of things, the Black Tide fired into the Death Eaters from all sides at all angles. A diagram of their positions would have looked like this:

N

BT DE BT

BT DE BT

Chokepoint

BT DE BT

BT DE BT

BT=Black Tide D=Death Eater N=Nundu

Essentially, the Death Eaters were caught in a crossfire of spells, arrows, and Goblin technology. One orc, unlucky enough to get targeted by a Marauder with a Hygar, was blown backwards into a troll. Though dazed, he was still alive- but not for long. The troll, with its typical crude logic, got mad at the orc and caved his skull in. The troll was soon killed by a Necromancer, his blood sucked out of his body as the Necromancer chanted his life-stealing spell.

One tribe of orcs was massacred by two Marauders with Splicers. The two Marauders, on opposite sides, scattered their fire in two opposing sweeps. The orcs fleeing before one Splicer attack were soon cut down as they ran into another.

It wasn't long until the Death Eaters decided to retreat, the Nundu ran towards Blaise right before they did so. However, they were stopped by a small group of Purgers, Seamus had brought along. Twin walls of flame, on opposite sides of the field, erupted and blocked off the path. Terry had gotten goggles just so that he could watch as the flames devoured them. He stopped firing his Skull-Master and traded it out with something that he had Ginny help him make. He shouted to his men to cover their eyes. It spat out hellfire along with his special concoction of burning fluid. Many creatures, unable to stop their forward momentum, burned to death. Some were so scared they ran right through it. Those on Terry's side became ash before they got out the other end. One particularly stubborn troll, its entire body alight, made it past the wall of flame that Terry wasn't on and walked thirty feet before Seamus mercifully killed it with a single shot. Its flaming, titanic corpse hit the ground with a boom.

The remaining Death Eaters (now numbering three thousand in all- their numbers had been halved in minutes), charged into the woods after their assailants. There was no bravery in this- they simply wanted to get away, no matter what. Seamus, using his Bayonet's sword end to cut down a Death Eater, yelled an order to use swords- a melee battle was on their hands. He turned and saw a Death Eater swinging his mace. No time to dodge or strike-

Ginny's bolt of negative energy rippled the air and struck the Death Eater's face. His face crumpled as his brain, skull, eyes, and tongue were all reduced to ashes. His body crumpled, the mace that could have brained Seamus dropping harmlessly to the forest floor.

Seamus nodded his thanks to Ginny, who grinned and winked back before turning to her own fight. Seamus ran forward, casting his own personal spell. Time slowed down. He felt its effects distorting everything, each blink lasting a minute.

[Blink,] he thought, his head giving out the random thoughts it always did in battle, [that's what I'll call it.]

As time slowed, he watched the mini-dramas about him unfold. A troll, bashing a Marauder to death, was tripped on the webbing of a Dusk Knight. As it fell, the Dusk Knight drove his spear into its stomach, disemboweling it. Its organs fell out to the floor, and it howled its death cry even as Terry burned it to death.

A Death Eater, casting his magic, sent a shockwave at a group of Marauders. One was killed as his brain imploded, while others were blown off their feet. He was killed a minute later by a Purger, his body dancing in the flames as he burned to ashes.

A Helene, much like the one in the chokepoint, gnashed and smashed into a group of Necromancers. The servants of Death went to meet their master, courtesy of teeth and legs, and the Helene turned to other targets. Seamus ran towards it, his speed carrying him to it in seconds. He leaped and slashed across the back of its front legs. Hamstrung, it cried out. Before the cry was even more than out of its throat, he'd cut its back legs too. The Helene fell to the forest floor like some fleshy meteor, roaring its pain. Seamus jumped on it, about to slit its throat, when he saw that Ginny was about to get stabbed. A Death Eater, sneaking up behind Ginny as she slay one of his comrades, readied his sword for a thrust. He ran forward, and before the Death Eater had even fully drawn his sword back, Seamus struck. The Death Eater's lungs were cut by Seamus' strike, and the Death Eater suffocated on his own blood. Turning off his Blink spell for a second, Seamus turned to Ginny. He smiled.

"There's the favor I owe you," he said, then turned around to fight. Ginny, smiling, turned back as well, and they stood there, fighting back to back. The Nundu soon came by them breathing more of its poisoned breathe at their enemies. They even saw Draco and shooting spells and arrows to help them even getting the drake close enough to get a Troll with its scorpion-like tail, poison included, from behind. It was here that Ginny was named "The Black Lady". Although she and Seamus were merely friends, they were seen

together so often that someone eventually coined the name. It gained great acceptance after the battle where they were seen together. Blaise, who watched them do so, was firing arrow after arrow before she grabbed a sword from a dead Marauder and cast a simple cutting spell through it. It cut through three trees and fifteen Death Eaters well just passing over the Black Tide members.

Blaise was gaining more power the longer this battle went on, because it provoked terror, pain, horror, anger, fear and that force-fed her magic with it, when suddenly something snapped. Harry who had been sitting on his throne watching the battle with his eye felt her change. She was no longer just without her humanity. She had just lost her mortality. Harry thought of the few ways to do so. The first would be gaining the favor of a god or something incredibly holy/divine/powerful like Padma with Earth, the next becoming something more like Neville, and then there was becoming a Jester like he himself. Becoming a Jester was rather difficult because not only most you lose your humanity but you must become immersed in what you are becoming the Jester of. He himself had become the Jester of Madness at the Ministry because in truth it was in madness and he lost his humanity there as well as soon as his rage consumed him. There were only Jesters of 'Evil' things. He nearly immediately realized that it wasn't the first two. It was the last. She had become a Jester, he then apparated as close to the battle field as he could get. He then became the Jester and tore off towards where Blaise was. He left five claw marks on the trees he passed by as he tore down the road. When he had first become the Jester he had had the need to kill someone so he killed Umbridge. If she went on killing, like he had felt himself needing to do, she would likely kill someone that was important to his forces.

Blaise had never felt like this. She felt like laughing even as she tore through the death eaters in front of her. She did a small spin on her right foot with her claws out to the side. She briefly wondered how she got claws, not remembering them from before. She then got over it and watched what her spin did to the surrounding Death eaters and started laughing. Blaise danced around the Death Eaters bring her raking across their bodies. She was dancing a dance of death. She soon couldn't stop laughing.

The most of the members of the Death Eaters, surrounded, surprised, and disoriented, eventually began fleeing back to

Voldemort. A scant few survived. Of the original six thousand, barely a hundred Death Eaters lived, of those only five saw the encounter between Blaise and Harry, and none of the monsters made it back to Voldemort. The Black Tide had won, but the cost was high; they had lost five hundred men that day, mostly in the charge. But, even so, Firion's Gate had joined. And with another city, the Black Tide could replace its losses.

She saw Harry arrive before going to join him. She saw all these little people between her and him. She smiled behind her mask, briefly wondering when she had got a mask, before deciding to just go through them quite literally. She saw Harry slow and start walking towards her. She noticed everyone seemed almost frozen and next to no one was fighting. She tore the organs of a death eater out before going to meet the Jester of Madness. She truly bowed to him after she went through four more Death Eaters to get to him and being covered in blood. She looked at him. His mask was on and she didn't like that at all. He had such a beautiful face after all. She reached up to take the mask off.

Seamus, having seen what happened to Dumbledore when Harry had removed his mask well he was The Jester, yelled across the channel that his Helmet made to look away. Draco, Ginny and Terry got the message as well and had their forces look away. Blaise removed Harry's mask, he did nothing to stop her, and then she removed her own. She then kissed him. Those that were still looking, mainly Death Eaters but still some Black Tide, had their eyes blown out. The aura caused by Two Jesters being so close together without their masks, which were more for the continued survival of those around them, killed them. Even if they looked like they were part of outer space they still had all their facial features, and with that kiss brought something rarely seen. It caused their powers as Jesters to become bigger. Jesters were the physical incarnation of the thing that they represent such as Madness (Harry) or Pain (Blaise) they could be gods to a normal immortal in power depending on what they represent. Because of this, and the fact that the gods had agreed to stop interfering for a long time now, it was rare for a Jester to exist, to increase in power unless the thing they represent is greatly increased, or to die. All the Jesters before Harry had been dead for hundreds of years because of 'Holy Warriors' or disagreements between Jesters. Blaise feel unconscious in his arms before returning to her human form. He quickly replaced his mask so as to not kill her. He picked her up and started toward the Jester's

Keep before yelling that it was alright to see again. The battle was over.

The battle became known as the "Forest of Spears".

Voldemort became enraged after learning what had transpired. He sent out bounties for all those in the battle that were of some importance.

Draco Malfoy (150 Thousand Galleons Alive/100-Thousand Dead) "Lord of Beasts" He gained this for controlling a Nundu and Drake at the same time which is on the same level as dragons in difficulty to control. He gained this by controlling the Ankheds to not attack any of his own troops. They in turn killed over 3 hundred Death Eaters.

Seamus Finnigan (175 Thousand Galleons Alive/100-Thousand Dead) "The Black General" Having killed 4 hundred he gained this, because he is a general he is less useful dead.

Ginny Weasley (175 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 100-Thousand Dead) "Lady of the Dead" or "The Black Lady" Having killed the same as Seamus she has this because she is the Master Necromancer

Terry Boot (175 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 100-Thousand Dead) "the Lord of Hellfire" He gained the title for his experimental Hellfire. Being a fire elemental as well and being able to control it had something to do with it as well. He killed the most monsters of everyone.

Blaise Zabini (195 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 100-Thousand Dead) "The Jester of Pain" She caused the deaths of many of his men and as such she got this. She also is close to Harry Potter.

Harry Potter (300 Thousand Galleons Dead) "Jester of Madness" or "Jester King"

Forever and Anon

Oceania, Jester's Keep. June 3rd. Two days after the Forest of Spears. 9:00 a.m.

Harry paced his current work-in-progress, the Jester's Keep. It was a dreary, rainy day, and the constant patter roared in his ears. He wondered briefly if Neville could control rain, being the Master of Water, then turned his mind back to his castle. Ah, yes. It was looking beautiful. No workers were here today, due to the horrid weather, but Harry didn't mind. They deserved a break. After seeing how Voldemort treated his troops, Harry had taken pains to be nice to his men. He was not a weakling towards them, but neither was he extremely harsh. His men were growing quite fond of his attitude. Which was what he'd planned. If soldiers liked you, they were more apt to work for you.

Harry did not want an overly tall castle. Once a castle was tall enough, it took less and less to knock it down. The more weight on top, the less force is needed to weaken the base and make the entire thing collapse. Harry planned on four, maybe five floors, and a tower or two. The first floor, complete now, was built as Harry had designed to be a place to hold massive meetings or to capture an invading enemy, but the second floor was built to very different specifications. After the raid on Gringotts, they'd found a vault belonging to an architect. The architect had made plans for a grand defensive structure and placed it in Gringott's supposedly secure vaults. Harry was quite grateful to him. The second floor was where much of the defensive equipment was both placed and built, and someone else had done his designing for him.

The first floor of his castle had a simple layout and resembled old Viking castles. When one walked in the front door, one entered a "lobby" of sorts. To the east and west stairs ran up while directly ahead lay the Grand Hall, where Harry held his banquets and celebrations. Easily the largest room currently in the castle, it stretched up two floors. His servants were even now finishing up the top bannisters of the Grand Hall. His throne sat at the far north end of the Hall, on a raised section approachable by stairs. A second throne, slightly smaller, was being built for Blaise. It would be set next to his, and a little in front- so he could watch her and make sure she wasn't trying anything. It paid to be paranoid, especially in his

case. People really were out to get him and she was one of the only people that could kill him.

The Grand Hall had four doors set in its sides, two on the eastern side and two on the western side. On the east half, the first door from the doorway to the south was the armory. Weapons and armor created by Cho Chang and her Enchanters was stockpiled here, subdivided into groups like swords, shields, helmets, etc. It was here that new recruits came to pick up their equipment. It would be moved to the second floor as now that the new Armory room upstairs was finished.

The second eastern door led to the stables... if one could call it that. This room, about three fourths as large as the Grand Hall, was a dark place where the giant spiders the Dusk Knights rode were kept and fed. Each had its own private cell, a dark place where it could spin its webs and sleep peacefully, or drink from a little bowl (inset into the wall) that magically refilled itself when empty. Live animals, usually rabbits or groundhogs from the Forest, were thrown in for meals. It was great entertainment for the spiders to catch the squealing animals. It was even more fun for the keepers to watch. The krakens were usually the keepers and found it out right fun to do so. They also kept the many captured beasts that the Krakens used here.

On the western side of the room, opposite the Armory, was the Elemental Orb's room. Only Fire and Air still lay inside, Water being bound to Neville's forehead and Earth keeping Padma companion on her wrist. Fire glowed cheerily, like a campfire that's just been restocked, and it had an ornate pillar decorated with rubies. Set on a raised platform by itself, it was almost always surrounded by Fire Elementalists. It had not chosen any King (and didn't plan to), out of respect for Earth already having done so. However, it had no compunction to teaching its Elementalists, and handled almost all the new Fire Elementalist training in Oceania. Harry had traded a few words with the Orb, and rather liked it. Fire whole-heartedly supported the Tide (incongruous as that statement seemed), and was allowed to have a few trinkets (hence the ruby-coated pillar).

Air, on the other hand, sat mostly by itself on the other side of the room on a plain white pillar, Harry had attempted to coax Air into joining them, but it had steadfastly refused. Being a creation of Wizards, it could not deny its Elementalists (which was why Water

Elementalists could still do magic, even though Water was silenced by Neville's ring), but it could have lent its ancient history and lore to the Tide. By refusing, it had doomed itself to a long life of silence. No Elementalists gathered about it, and it glowed an unnoticeable, dull white color, as if trying to hide itself. At times it seemed to have arguments with its self.

The last room on the first floor, reached by entering the second western door, was the kitchen. Although "kitchen" is a rather small term for it; it was a grand place, fit for a king. Huge and magically powered freezers, great ovens, formulas perfectly mixed with magic- it was a gourmet chef's delight.

Harry walked into the Grand Hall, walked to his throne, and touched the armrest tenderly. He stood there, looking at it, and wondering. How did it start? Where did it start? He was human now, so his face was visible. On it, a mask of thoughtful contemplation could be seen. The thunderbolt-shaped scar was lengthened by his lowered eyes, as if trying to stretch forth and strike his nose. After a moment, Harry smiled, a normal human smile. Then he began laughing. He turned and sat in his chair, enjoying its comfort and feel. He intended to enjoy it forever and anon... and listen to the endless sound of rain in this country... Forever and anon

And no one could stop him. Now he must see to Blaise as she had yet to wake and no one but he himself was allowed anywhere near her.

Voldemort's Fortress, England. Same day, same time.

England is known for two things; a long and elaborate history, and a great deal of rain. As some wise man or another mused once, " The reason England has so many poets is that there are so many words that rhyme with rain." Whether he was right or not, there was one person in England who was hearing a poem in his head- and not a pleasant one either. He would have felt even worse if he had known that Harry was thinking eerily similar thoughts.

[Forever and anon, we dance the endless waltz of centuries,] Voldemort thought, sitting in his study with his face a study of worry, fingers rubbing his temples as he attempted to drive the thrice-damned poem from his mind. [All is laughter as we fall to the endless sound of rain...]

Voldemort sighed. Unable to rid the poem from his mind entirely, he forcibly moved it to the back of his head. It stayed there, running constantly, an endless litany that was nonsense but, in a part of him buried so deep he was hardly aware of it, it made sense. He did not know why... but it was right, somehow.

He leaned back, eyes closed, into his chair. Two entire companies. Lost. And the few survivors had reported that, as far as they knew, the Black Tide had suffered only minimal losses. Yesterday, he'd read that Firion's Gate, a small town west of Oceania, had joined up with Harry. Damn it. Three towns already, what few forces Harry had lost would soon be replaced by new recruits.

He still had four companies, which gave him about twelve thousand or so Wizard troops, plus about five hundred monsters. Before, he thought he'd be able to defeat Harry with only a small force. Now he wondered if all of his forces would be enough.

He sat there, the man once called the Dark Lord, and through his mind, for some reason scaring him worse than anything ever had before in his long and twisted life, he kept hearing a poem...

[Forever and anon, we dance the endless waltz of centuries... All is laughter as we fall to the endless sound of rain... You will join it soon]

Voldemort sat ramrod straight in his chair and shivered as that part added itself to the poem that haunted him. He heard laughter and thought that such a cruel sound should not be called that. He forced himself to relax

Durmstrang undisclosed location in Russia. Same day, same time.

Hermione looked outside. New troops were busy filing in. Durmstrang had shut down all of its scholastic courses and was now fully-focused on military purposes. Hermione and Ron had been made the official heads of the White Shore. They had no official title- the charter merely stated the White Shore would follow their lead- but both had been given nicknames by the troops.

"Old Grim" was what the soldiers called Ron, and it fit. He did look old and grim. Lines, premature on his young face, encircled his mouth, which was set in an almost permanent thin line. His sword, glowing with enchantment, was a constant presence at his side. He was old for his age... very old.

Hermione, for her part, wasn't looking too young either. She'd been shocked this morning when she'd gazed in the mirror- was this the face of a young girl? Her face had lines on it- not wrinkles, not yet, but the start of them. Her eyes were sadder, deeper somehow, as if the well of all the pain she'd suffered had become visible in them. She had a long streak of white hair amidst her normal brown, the result of a Necromancer spell that had hit her in the battle for Beauxbatons. She looked old. She'd cried when she'd seen it, and Ron (laying next to her, on the other side of the four-post bed) had woken up and held her, asking her what was wrong. She'd cried in his arms, as he rocked her back and forth. The troops had taken to calling her the "Snow Lady", ironically, she thought to herself, something that she excelled at were cold spells, they called her that partly for her hair... but also because she just *seemed* like a lady. Part of it was the way she carried herself, the great and somehow sad dignity in her almost royal face, and part of it was the way she talked... but it was mostly just because she was a lady. It couldn't be explained better than that.

She was now head of the healers, surprisingly, of their entire forces after taking to healing like a fish does to water similarly to how she had taken to cold spells. She had named her organization of Fire because on a beach a fire at night was always helpful, like they would be.

Ron 'Old Grim' Weasley had taken to training as a Paladin as she had to as a Healer. He still used his sword but he was training to kill Harry. He would be a Holy warrior if it meant to kill Harry. Some of the men had taken after him and he soon was the Leader of the organization called Crab by their forces.

The 'Sands' were for now Leaderless. But they continued to fight as they always had.

She remembered when she welcomed Patil Parvati. She had joined a group of spellcasters largely thought extinct. They are Druids that became angry at Harry and the Kraken for not only tearing down

most of the Black Forest but for the Kraken taking control over natural animals. Patil was more in it for revenge against her sister Padma for going to Harry instead of sticking together like they had promised when they were little. Patil was the leader and most advanced spellcaster of the Druids and had the most nature related spells. They had named their organization Plant like on a beach.

She had been surprised when Percy Weasley had approached her about taking up a job here. She had told him that they didn't really make money and he told her that he wanted to help because they had killed his fiancé (I think that means the female one but I have no clue) in the Beauxbatons attack. He now led the Enchanters in making weapons for the White Shore.

George Weasley had come to her after the Hogsmeade attack. He talked to her about how his twin had been. He had been trying a particular class of magic when it had happened he had been away as had Fred and that is all that saved them. George had talked to Fred and Fred just took it as a Joke. He had done over the top jokes that got people seriously hurt but he never did it on purpose, Fred however had. He took a sort of pleasure that George had never understood. George quickly left to help against Harry. He had become a Monk. Monks use their magic to near or break the human limit and then use hand to hand combat to kill their opponents. George had first learned how to fight at such a level that that was useful. George didn't know what had happened to Fred. His organization had taken to being called the Calm to represent the calm, but dangerous, sea.

She had also been approached by Celestina Warbeck who had offered the support of the bards. She was their leader with the rest of the 'Weird Sisters'. They had helped everyone but were disliked by the Crabs because of their own fun loving nature. They had an organization called Song. They had added to morale greatly. All of the organizations had a representative add something to the White Shores flags. The others were obvious but the Song simply added a guitar next to the fire.

Hermione was standing outside her and Ron's room, looking down at the blizzard covered grounds of Durmstrang. White Shore soldiers were loading up on boats, getting ready. They were making a second move soon, in conjunction with Ministry forces. She could

see the small forest that had sprung up after the Druids had settled, moving with the cold winds.

An errant breeze, cold like death, struck her and made her shiver in her lace nightgown. And then, for no reason whatsoever, something came into her mind

[Forever and anon, we dance the endless waltz of centuries...]

and she cocked her head, thinking. [What was that?] She thought, blinking as she stood there in the cold and snow in her white gown. [Something I read? Something

true something said in her mind.

I heard?]

And then, unbidden, a second line came to her. And in it, she thought she saw something past the simple words and phrases, a deeper meaning to it... but maybe it was just the cold and the early time and her own nerves.

[All is laughter as we fall to the endless sound of rain...]

She shivered. And it was not from the cold. She heard a final line

[You will join it soon]

She almost screamed as she recognized Harry's voice saying the poem.

Menace of the Deep

Yes I am changing it slowly (yes the names are the same. I. Am. Horrible. with names. So I decided to use the easy method of using name someone else did) but surely and I thank TheMadnessKing even though he didn't log in.

June 29th. Somewhere in France, 150 miles west of Lunas.

The Ministry officials surveyed their hastily-called army. Consisting mostly of European wizards, they were arrayed in the ornate attire of Ministry soldiers. They wore tight fitting chain mail outfits, and over that wore intricately designed plates of armor over vital areas. The style had been invented well over four centuries ago, and because of the general lack of wizard wars, had never been upgraded. Two shoulder plates, a torso plate, gauntlets, a groin cup, and iron boots, all inset with glowing runes of protection, were placed on top of the chain mail. Each carried a spear in their hands, with a broadsword for close-in work slung over their backs. Their helmets were open-faced, conic in style, and swept backwards, much like the crowns of the ancient Egyptian pharaohs. On each was the Ministry insignia. Compared to the Black Tide or the White Shore they looked like children that had gotten a hold of some of their soldier great grand parents gear.

These were the rank and file soldiers. To their right, and wearing normal plate armor (much like the standard issue of the Black Tide or White Shore), the captains sat astride their warhorses. Each carried a heavy lance and a longsword. Their helmets were square, with visors. Some were up, and the faces within were a hodge-podge mixture: Some looked almost hungry for the upcoming battle, while others showed their trepidation and fear.

There were eight thousand regular Ministry forces, but the White Shore (which had received a huge influx of new members due to the good publicity) had donated two thousand to help. Wearing the white armor and standing apart from the normal Ministry forces, they were dazzling in the sunlight.

The troops were before a Wizengamot embassy house in France. Amelia Susan Bones and two of the Ministry's generals stood beside her on a balcony on the third floor of the mansion. She briefly

thought over how her niece had joined the White Shore but didn't try to get her to quit the organization. The army lay before her. In the distance, the Beast-keepers could be heard shouting at their charges, and the responding snarls and growls. Something was making the monsters they commanded act up, and they could not be present for inspection by the Minister.

Amelia Susan Bones looked over her force. It was ten thousand strong. She hoped it was enough to take back Beauxbatons (she refused to think of it as Lunas as that would mean that they acknowledged them) and yet, the cold corpse-tendrils of fear that had entered her soul when Ron and Hermione had first entered the Wizengamot (and had never left her since), laughed at this. It wasn't enough, it whispered. Nowhere near enough to fight them.

Against what you face, nothing is or every will be.

She ignored the voice and watched the troops, under orders from the shouting generals standing beside her, file off. They sung war songs as they marched, uplifting and sometimes bitterly comic, but always in tune with their steps. She saw

And suddenly heard something

(Forever and anon we waltz the endless dance of centuries... everything is laughter as we fall to the endless sound of rain... Soon you will join it) It spoke in the voice of the one who had caused all of this but without the childish tone it used to have.

That made her scream out loud. The singing of ten thousand warriors drowned her out.

Lunas. Two hours later. 1:00 p.m.

Fleur smiled at the ambassador from Harry's newest city, the largest so far. When Firion's Gate had joined, many cities expected the Ministry to retaliate. But when the Ministry did nothing, several cities that had expressed (if quietly) pro-Tide opinions switched sides. Not counting Oceania and Lunas, there were four Wizarding communities in the Tide: Firion's Gate (pop. 1500), King's Valley (pop. 3400), Hope-Tree (pop. 2100), and the newest addition (whose representative was standing across from Fleur now):

Halley's Gambit, with a population of 5000. The new additions were extremely pleasing to all involved. The road to Firion's Gate that Harry had demolished before the battle with Voldemort was repaired, and with the sudden influx of trade into Oceania from the new towns, Firion's Gate's population had jumped, going from a thousand to twenty-five hundred in a few weeks. Cameron had started becoming a frequent sight around Oceania, personally delivering several trade loads. To enter through either way one had to have one of the higher members of The Kraken so that the Ankhegs didn't attack them. They had taken permanent residence under the roads to Oceania. Oceania sat between the two English towns of the Black Tide, with Firion's Gate on one side and King's Valley on the other.

Lunas, meanwhile, sat in the middle of a North-South line between Halley's Gambit and Hope-Tree. Fleur hoped Lunas would grow as the two traded with each other. Fleur was the official head over all mainland Europe, with Harry busy in England. Luna was helping with the paperwork that came with that.

The ambassador, after a few more pleasantries were exchanged, bowed and left. Behind him, Spithe walked in. His face was grave.

"My Ladyship Fleur Delacour, emissary of the Jester King," Spithe said, snapping a Black Tide salute (right fist, palm inward, tapping chest) and holding it, "we have a problem."

Fleur looked at him. In all the time he'd been in Lunas with her, he'd never used her full official title before. Luna did so when she was joking without her cruel sense of humor that seemed to be inherited with the Title Ebony Flame. She cocked her head quizzically and said, "Stand down. What is it, Secondary General Spithe?"

He ended his salute and said, "We've discovered Ministry forces. They're coming from the west, and strength is guessed at ten thousand." His face, looking stoic up until now, turned frantic as emotion took him over. "They'll be here tomorrow night!"

Fleur's eyes widened in shock. "Tomorrow night! Oh God, what are we going to do?"

"We," said a deep voice from the hall, "are going to slaughter them."

Neville entered, flexing his right fist. His knuckles popped loudly, and he turned to face Spithe and Fleur. Luna entered to the right of him. She had a sadist look in her eyes that Fleur was unfamiliar with.

"What are you talking about?" Spithe looked at him. "Even if we call for help, Hope-Tree and Halley's Gambit won't be able to get here soon enough. We need more time!"

"The Ministry won't arrive for some time yet," Neville said, smiling a grin that reminded Fleur of a crocodile. "They have to cross a lake to get here..."

He chuckled. "And I've arranged for a little surprise." Luna gained a positively evil grin as he did. He called Samuel briefly to find out if he, and his vampires, were going to help him with his plan.

Lake Gato, east of Beauxbatons, same time.

Lake Gato was a French lake with a Spanish name. It had reached this odd conjunction by a strange twist of fate. A Spanish man named Pizarro (after the famous explorer) had been on a journey through France when he found this lake. He was a Wizard, and his cat familiar had been traveling with him. When they found the lake and stopped for a bit, his cat almost drowned, and when he finally pulled it out the cat's indignation had been so great (and his wet fur so odd looking) that Pizarro had nearly choked laughing. The still-chuckling Pizarro had henceforth named it Lake Gato (literally, Cat's Lake) after his familiar's little mishap.

After what happened that night, it was known as the Lake of the Damned.

Ministry Encampment, shores of Lake Gato, around 11:00 p.m. that day.

The general chosen for the expedition was a young, hotheaded man named Alucard who had been regarded by the top brass as "aggressive." It was for that reason he had been suddenly promoted to General. If he had seen Harry on the street, he would have shaken his hand. He had been waiting for this chance all his life.

Gen. Alucard was sitting in his tent, thinking up what he regarded as brilliant new strategies (they weren't half bad, as it went), when he suddenly felt the urge to go outside. He didn't know why. He just felt like some fresh air. He put his ink-pen down and walked out.

Outside, he was greeted by a blast of hot air. The low campfires of his men blazed all around, girdling the enormous lake to his left. He saw his men sitting near low campfires, talking and laughing. Most had taken their bulky armor off and laid it next to them. It was too fine a night to wear something so damn hot. They sat at the far edges of their fires' light, trying to avoid the heat. The night was damn hot, hotter than it should have been, really. He began to think about this, and to his credit, his mind leaped immediately to magic and the Tide- but then he heard it.

Singing. Singing so beautiful that all he wanted was to drown in it...

He began to walk towards the water.

Ministry Encampment, North shores of Lake Gato. Same time.

The Beast-keeper's encampment was the first to notice that something was wrong. Viewed as being apart from the main army, they were set off in their own special section on the north side of the lake. There, the Beast-keepers, strange Wizards with the power to control monsters similar to the Kraken of the Black Tide but less cruel to their charges, watched their charges. The animals were restless, as if feeling something odd in the air. The Beast-keepers, who were so attuned to animals that they had picked up some of their traits, felt it too. They stood guard, not a man in the encampment asleep. They watched with nervous eyes, hands on maces, swords, whips. Something was wrong tonight.

Very wrong.

In the White Shore encampment on the far eastern side of the lake, across from where Gen. Alucard was wading knee-deep into the water, a few of the more magic sensitive soldiers looked about warily, but without the keen senses of the Beast-keepers, they were mostly blind to the world that night.

The south and west sides of the lake were filled with standard Ministry troops. None of them, green soldiers as they were, noticed anything odd.

That was about to change.

Lake Gato, west shore. Same time.

Gen. Alucard walked into the water. He heard that singing, and he so wanted to meet the singer. She sounded so beautiful, so grand. He wanted to meet her, and sit at her feet, just listening to that song...

A few soldiers saw him wade out, but not seeing (or not noticing) the look of empty concentration on his face, they merely assumed he was going to go for a swim to cool off. The night was pretty hot, after all. Some thought it was unnaturally hot. They saw a few others go in after him, and some noticed them as high-ranking officers. Some joked that Gen. Alucard was drunk off his ass and his staff was going to go save him before he drowned himself. The soldiers laughed and forgot about their commanders for the time.

As he walked out (the water was now waist-deep on him), the soldiers behind him, the singing stopped. He stopped, too, listening with pathetic eagerness. Where was it? Oh God, had he lost it? That beautiful voice...

Two enormously strong tentacles shot out of the water and dragged him in. The cousin of the Siren, being that Siren is the salt water version, that had sung had gotten her prey.

The officers behind Gen. Alucard (all of whom had heard that singing, too) barely had time to widen their eyes in amazement before tentacles grabbed them too. Soon, every one of them was underwater, held by the powerful bands of muscle wrapped about their bodies. They stopped struggling soon enough. Gen. Alucard, who actually had a mind of fine tactical brilliance and who would have given Seamus a run for his money had he survived, floated face down under the water, mouth held wide in one last attempt to breathe air. A woman's face, young and beautiful, came out of the murky darkness surrounding his floating body. Following it was a woman's torso, but instead of arms two tentacles emerged from its

shoulders. Below the waist, it was a morass of tentacles. The Dare (the name of this cousin of the sirens) smiled, and four rows of teeth, two on the top and two more on the bottom, gleamed in the dark. They would have not looked out of place in a shark's mouth.

Bringing one arm-tentacle up, the Dare wrapped it about Gen. Alucard's body and began to chant underwater, the words strangely clear underneath the water. Soon Gen. Alucard's body twitched, and the bodies of his fellows began to move as well. Caught in the web of the dare's song of necromancy, they stood upright and turned around, walking back to a camp once full of allies, and now full of enemies. The Dare swam back into the deeper water, her part done, for now. For she had just turned the entire commanding staff into zombies, the army was going to be in total disarray, and the battle hadn't even started yet.

On the east shore, the first hint of trouble was the sound of yells and screams from the opposite shore. Sound carried well across the lake, (as it does in or under water) and the White Shore woke for battle when the noise across them reached their ears. They ran for armor, for swords, for weaponry. They had their backs turned to the shore, their minds on their gear, which was why they didn't notice the leaping, jawed things at their backs, nor the great crocodiles emerging from the waters, until the screams began.

Strange, two-legged creatures called Corpse Hungers began hopping out of the water as soon as the White Shore turned its back. Strange creatures, they had two webbed feet for hopping, a short tail like a tadpoles for swimming, two eyes on the top of their head (like a frog) for seeing prey above the shallow waters they lived in, a short and stumpy body that faintly resembled a frog in both color and shape, large lips that hid their great big set of jaws that were wrongly proportioned for their small body. And that was just about it. They had little brain to no intelligence to speak of, and would eat anything, even each other if hungry enough. They were called Corpse Hungers because of their fondness for eating the corpses of beached whales. They would hop up onto the beach, take huge chunks out of the whale's carcass, and hop back to the waves. They lived in both saltwater and freshwater, with no real changes between the two. They usually reached about two foot in height with large ones reaching 3 feet.

Neville had performed a reconnaissance mission around Lunas when he'd first arrived. He'd been looking for large bodies of water, and when he checked out Lake Gato, he had spotted a colony of Corpse Hungers here. Just to play with his powers, he had begun to make them larger and stronger. He kept them from eating each other, and bred the biggest and toughest of them.

At the same time, he had found crocodiles here, not the usual kind Muggles knew of, but Dire Crocodiles (as the Ministry termed them), beasts more closely related to sea serpents than any Muggle crocodiles. They easily reached twenty foot in length. He thought they were interesting, and he had messed with Lake Gato's internal infrastructure. He had made it one of the most dangerous places in France, in regard to water creatures.

When he'd heard the Ministry was coming, he'd noticed that Lake Gato was on their way. And he had been delighted.

After all, every scientist wants to try out his latest experiment and what they do. Luna had cast a simple spell on herself, Samual and his forces to watch and walk on the water from the middle of the lake waited for it to begin.

The same rushing horde of Corpse Hungers, great crocodiles, and other monsters hit the other shores at the same time. Neville, miles away, had used his incredible powers over Water to link with his "pets" (as he thought of them). He held them back with sheer force of will, and when the time was right he unleashed them. The result was a nightmarish assault.

On the south shore, one unlucky Ministry member was killed by a Corpse Hunger as the attack started. The monster had hopped into the firelight, and the soldier (not recognizing it for what it was), had poked it with the butt of his spear as a joke. It had opened its jaws and bitten off the end of his spear. Before the amazed man could react, it had leapt forward and bitten his face off with a sideways bite.

Another soldier, noticing the beasts for what they were, had shouted an alarm and swung his sword at one. It had leapt forward, underneath his blow, and bitten his leg. He hacked at it, as it mindlessly gnawed his unarmored leg, until a second had bitten his arm. Trying to shake it off, he screamed as a third one leapt on him

and bit his throat out. He went down, the monsters on him never stopping as they bit, bit, bit till there was nothing left.

Those men in the front of the camp were slaughtered. Those farther back, being granted time by the deaths of their comrades, were able to get somewhat prepared before the leaping monstrosities caught up to them. They formed a spearhead, shields and spears out, and began fighting back the horde. Faced against a wall of armor and points, the Hungers were pushed back.

The crocodiles caught up at this point, and the soldier's valiant attempts to survive were wrecked. The enchanted spears did little more than irritate the great beasts, and their shields of magiced metal were unable to stop their gnashing and powerful jaws. One soldier, part of the vanguard, was bitten in half when one crocodile went raging through his group. He died under its rending teeth, and the last sensation he ever had was a Corpse Hunger beginning to devour his arm.

The crocodiles having broken the line open, Corpse Hunger poured in. The soldiers retreated as fast as they could, some throwing aside their weapons in their haste to escape the terrible gnawing horde. As they headed farther into the camp, they ran into their fellows. These men, having the most time to prepare, were ready and waiting for the monsters. Flames, magics, and arrows rained out over the night sky as the soldiers gave back everything the monsters had given them. One crocodile died as a particularly powerful Wizard sent a lightning bolt at it. He had barely controlled his magic long enough to cast that spell and was exhausted from doing so. Striking it in the eyes (the weakest point on any magical reptile), its small brain was instantly fired. It fell over, tongue lolling out, and crushed a few Corpse Hunger as it fell. A second Corpse Hunger paused at the enormous corpse and took a bite out of the meaty tongue before it was struck with an arrow in the side. It fell over, screaming harshly. Two of its fellows hopped up and began eating its still kicking and living legs.

The southern army pushed them back, fighting hard. Soon, as the men warmed to battle, green soldiers were reborn as scarred fighters as the battle turned. Neville, sensing loss here and having done his job, retreated what was left of his horde into the lake. The last Corpse Hunger on the beach, a slow one who hadn't quite made it out, was killed by the swift spear-work of a Ministry soldier.

Turning to survey their camp, the triumphant soldiers looked in awe. The camp was in ruins. Tents hung in tatters. Only those in the very back were untouched. Of the ten thousand soldiers in the Ministry army, four thousand had been camped here. Now only three thousand remained. They'd lost over a thousand men in only half an hour. They were not going to willingly let any more die from this onslaught.

Hearing the screams and struggles from the western camp, the men looked at each other, nodded grimly, and charged off. Far away, Neville smiled. This was even more entertaining than he'd thought. He had started laughing and all the creatures that he controlled seemed to laugh with him. Those of on the east shore, knew the laughter well and saw figures on top of the water moving towards them or those on the south shore.

Lunas, Neville's room in former Beauxbatons Castle, 11:30 p.m.

Neville floated above the water of his room, the swirling water below him casting off a strange, sapphire glow over the room. It was a fairly large room, with the center taken up by the great pool there. Its waters were set in a roughly rectangular shape, with only two foot of stone on either of the shorter sides to allow passage to the far side of the room. On the far side, various magical ingredients, potions, and oddities related to Water were gathered on a massive wooden shelf that covered the back wall. A glance revealed strange things, in that maddening, watery glow; a massive crocodile skull, a tentacle from a Kraken (well over fifty foot in length), not the organization, coiled up like a rope, and (strangest of all), the face of a beautiful mermaid, frozen in a glass sphere for all time. The rest of the room was almost entirely bare, except for a desk next to the shelf upon which rested Neville's pen and writing pads. The pen was enchanted so that he could just send his thoughts to it and let it do the writing for him. He could lounge in his pool and finish paperwork at the same time, useful and something that he had hidden from Fleur and Luna.

At the moment, though, all his thoughts are directed at Lake Gato, far to the west of Lunas, nearly 75 miles. Neville was in the classic position of the Indian mediums, his legs tucked in and his arms bent at the elbows, pointer and thumb touching. His eyes were closed, and the Crystal of Water pulsed slowly in his forehead. He floated

above the water, his body nude save for his long, trailing cloak. It was not the body of a young teenager. His body was smoothly muscled, the muscles of a martial artist and not the blocky muscles of a bodybuilder. Like water, his skin seemed to ripple with the strength of the muscles underneath. His entire body rolled with power. In the light from the swirling yet silent whirlpool beneath him (the only light in the room) he looked like some strange, aberrant figure of serenity, a nightmare of a Buddha.

There, in that madness, he smiled and laughed. His grin was the same as those crocodiles who hunt the Nile river bank, full of teeth and a mad happiness at the prospect of blood and meat. Of killing and rending, gnashing jaws. Not to mention that his teeth looked more like those of a Shark than a human.

The southern wing of the army had just finished its battle. The north part, the Beast-keepers, had easily repulsed the attack on them. It was the lightest of the four. When Neville saw that he was not going to be able to kill them with a surprise attack, he'd diverted most of the Hungers and all the great crocodiles. They were all going east, to a meeting with the White Shore along with the forces that Samuel had provided along with going himself. And on the western shore...

Once more, he smiled, his insane smile transferring to the monsters that he had created and they smiled as well as laughed.

Lake Gato, same time. Eastern shore.

In every war, there are heroes. The same is true of this war. On that day, June 29th (almost the thirtieth), Kaleb Isaacs woke to battle not knowing what role he would play in the coming battle. He woke blurrily, his sleepy eyes and ears not registering what was happening until he saw a soldier go down, overtaken by Corpse Hungers. The noises of the feeding monsters- and the screams of the soldier- were enough to fully alert Kaleb's mind to what was happening. And with that, he grabbed his longsword and ran out to battle.

His first thoughts were lost as he gazed around him. The Corpse Hungers were overrunning the front of the camp. Fires erupted as braziers and torches were knocked onto tents, fabrics, supplies. The flames danced and leaped on the tents, as if enjoying the carnage

and laughing at human misfortune, screams rang out everywhere. He heard the creatures also laughing at their misfortune and immediately knew who was behind this.

His second thought was how hot it was. Unbeknown to him, Neville's magic was heating the area around Lake Gato up. His crocodiles were generally slow and lethargic, but he'd found that heat vastly improved their performances. Unfortunately for the White Tide, his crocodiles were performing very well right now. As Kaleb watched, one stomped on a running soldier, causing his body to crumple like a soda can. Blood and gore spewed out of his mouth and eyes as his body's fluids sprayed out. Kaleb watched in horror. And then it was upon him.

Neville had only six crocodiles in Lake Gato. He had sent three to the south, one to the west, and two to the east (he hadn't pit any north, when he found out about the Beastkeeper's awareness of his plan). He didn't want to lose any if he could avoid it. He'd pulled them out of the south before he'd lost more than one there, and he didn't think the east would give him much more trouble than the south.

His hopes were dashed by one brave warrior.

Kaleb Isaacs, seventeen years old, faced off against a great crocodile. And inside him, inside the fear, he found something.

He found the heart and soul of a knight and warrior that was willing to do battle with the greatest of beings if it meant to protect those that deserved it in his mind.

He ran forward, not without fear but ignoring it inside him, hearing the true essence and call of courage, and looking upon the monster before him not as a nightmare but as a foe that could be slain. He ran towards it, straight forward. The crocodile, thinking it' prey was rather stupid, opened it's mouth and rushed forward.

Kaleb leaped, straight into the monster's open mouth. And as he leaped, he sent his blade whistling through the air over his head. It struck the jaw dead center, and the force of his will and magic sheared the monster's flesh. Scales that would have resisted

stronger magic with lesser will behind it fell before the strength of Kaleb's soul, will and magic.

And the blade, traveling through the skin, sliced into the skull and sliced the brain apart, severing all the internal connections permanently. Kaleb, his blow struck, leaped out of the beast's mouth.

This all happened in less than ten seconds.

The crocodile stayed standing a moment longer, the upper part of its face lopsided and sloping, curiously unbleeding. Then, in an explosion of blood and gore, it fell and died. Far away, Neville's smile changed to a snarl. Bastard child. He mentally commanded the other crocodile to attack Kaleb, and set the Hungers upon him in swarms. He would show the boy what denying him meant.

Kaleb, his face strangely calm, saw the Hungers stop chasing their targets and run towards him. Still feeling the courage and honor of the knight, he raised his sword. He thought he would die. He accepted this and decided to die with honor, in battle and with the corpses of his enemies surrounding him. There were many worse things. He stared the monsters down as they rushed him, his face still calm as death came like an onrushing wave towards him. He charged into it slaying Corpse Hungers by the half dozens. Soon the wave was going to consume him.

The lightning that came out of nowhere stopped that wave.

He looked up, surprised. And above him, a sight he never forgot. A beautiful bird, gray in color, a great hawk that swirled over the battlefield, thunderclouds swirled about it, and in its eyes he saw the hint of a promised rainbow. It opened its mouth, and instead of a raptor's cry, thunder crackled. Lightning rained down as the Thunderbird struck again and again.

The Beast-keepers had come to aid their allies. Kaleb raised his sword and yelled to his comrades, all staring at the great bird before them and listening to the muted rushing of many feet, as a stampede came from the north.

"Forth! Forth to war!" he cried, his voice ringing over the battlefield. And behind him, with the muted roar of hundreds, they came, pushing back the monsters. A great noise of steel on flesh, of

screams and roars, of thunder and fire, began on the beach.

It was not much later that it stopped as a sphere of blue electricity suddenly covered western side of the lake. The crackling, rippling force seemed to hang in the air and pulse, and then it contracted into itself almost ferociously. And then a huge, almost soundless explosion demolished the western side of the lake.

Western shore, Lake Gato, five minutes before.

The one crocodile on this side retreated. It was in the water and safely out of the way. Some of the Hungers came back to, although some had to stay. They had to protect the shambling body of Gen. Alucard.

Alucard walked forth, his dead face slack. As with all necromancy, there was no soul in the corpse, just the will of its master. And her will was simple.

Get to the middle of the camp and use the glowing, blue thing in his hand.

Alucard shambled forth, protected by the honor guard of Hungers that surrounded him. The other zombies were wrecking havoc elsewhere. Hungers ran here and there, some not even fighting, just causing havoc. One bit the wheels of a cart and made it tip over, spilling its load of food into the main "road" between the tents. All a distraction.

Just a distraction.

As Alucard walked forward, no one saw the Shatterstar in his hand. He stumbled through a world of chaos, seeking its center.

He finally shambled into it. Here. His master's voice, her will. He raised his hand. In it, the Shatterstar pulsed its serene blue light, a spark of order in chaos, a spark of order that would destroy it all.

And Alucard turned the spark to a flame.

"SHATTER!" his undead throat echoed, oddly toneless.

Madame Maxine's Shatterstar went oddly dark, only a hint of azure in it's deepest core. Then that seemed to rush out, to travel through endless eons of space and time to burst out of the glass with a shockwave that sent waves of force through his dead form. His command had been simple, direct, and without conditions. His command, henceforth, included himself. The sparkling blue net of electricity burned his undead form, seared him, yet he held on. The net burned everything in it's way, rending man and monster, tent and wagon. It extended a mile above them, and covered all the western half of the shore. It's sphere of power even entered the ground, searing through rock and stone and ancient fossils of long dead animals. There it stayed, pulsing for a second. And then, gathering itself together once more, it contracted hard. As Kaleb, on the eastern shore, shaded his eyes from the sudden brightness, the net formed once more into the Shatterstar. The sphere contracted.

The world exploded, a blast so strong that it seemed almost soundless. Every creature on the western half, every living human, was killed. Over four thousand soldiers, all slain in that electric fire. The southern part of the army had not had time to arrive when the blast erupted. If they had, they would have died, too. As it was, only those in the front were harmed, though all of them were knocked over by the rush of air from the blast. Several were knocked unconscious, and many found their ears or noses bleeding.

The ground was blasted apart. A huge channel was dug, a new river formed. Millions of gallons rushed out of Lake Gato to fill the void. The debris was washed away in a flood tide of water.

Alucard's dying form was the last thing to fall. Still clutching the Shatterstar, his burned and blasted corpse was knocked down and dragged off by the current's undertow.

On the other side of the lake Samuel's forces had joined the monsters in of the lake in attacking the White Shore. Samuel's forces were made almost entirely of vampires so that they could escape when the battle was over rather simply. One such vampire became known as 'The Heart Striker' because she forced her hand into the chests of her victims and pulled out their hearts before in the last moments of their existence she ate it in front of them.

She was the leader of this group of vampires and had been for decades. She had an angelic face that, even when covered in blood, makes you want to kiss her. To some the blood only made them want to kiss her more. She was a red headed woman with a small bust, curvy hips, her hair reaching said curvy hips and lean deceiving muscles. She led the vampires to kill over five hundred of the White Shore and a hundred of the Beast-keepers. She had black nails that tore through the faces of her enemies. She had joined the Black Tide because she had seen what the last Jester had done to the world before being killed by a holy warrior and wanted to be a part of it this time around. She gained the respect of the Ebony flame by making sure that the minimal amount of her forces died before retreating. They vanished into the night like they were never there, the only clue that they had even been there at all were the corpses of those they killed. They had collected their own bodies before vanishing, the creatures of the deep retreated back into the shadowed water that looked almost like it was dyed with blood.

Bountries on the Black Tide

Harry Potter (600 Thousand Galleon Dead from Ministry. 300 thousand Galleon Dead from Voldemort) "The Jester King" or "The Jester of Madness"

Seamus Finnigan (160 Thousand Galleons Alive/Dead, Ministry. 175 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 100-Thousand Dead, Voldemort) "The Black General"

Ginny Weasley (150 Thousand Galleons Dead, Ministry. 175 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 100-Thousand Dead, Voldemort) "Lady of the Dead" or "The Black Lady"

Blaise Zabini (150 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 120-Thousand Dead, Ministry. 195 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 100-Thousand Dead, Voldemort) "The Jester of Pain"

Neville Longbottom (150 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 120-Thousand Dead) "Master of Water"

Padma Parvati (150 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 120-Thousand Dead) "Queen of Earth"

Draco Malfoy (145 Thousand Galleons Alive/Dead, Ministry. 150 Thousand Galleons Alive/100-Thousand Dead, Voldemort.) "King of Beasts"

Luna Lovegood (145 Thousand Galleons Alive/Dead) "Lady of Destruction"

Terry Boot (145 Thousand Galleons Alive/Dead, Ministry. 175 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 100-Thousand Dead, Voldemort) "Lord of Hellfire"

Samual (145 Thousand Galleons Dead) "Lord of Misfits"

Cho Chang (145 Thousand Galleons Alive/Dead) "Lady of Monstrosity"

Fleur Delacour (140 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 120-Thousand Dead) "The Metal Winged Lady"

Wedge (130 Thousand Alive/ 110 Thousand dead) apprenticed under Terry Boot. NKN

Richard Spithe (130 Thousand Alive/ 110 Thousand dead) "Secondary General"

Alex Vicks (130 Thousand Alive/ 110 Thousand dead) "Secondary General"

Victoria Heavenwalker (140 thousand dead) "the Heart Striker"

Current organizations in Black Tide.

Marauders are the basic soldier and terror squad. Their leader is Seamus who only takes orders from Harry or Blaise depending on the situation. His second in command is Vick and Spithe.

Purgers are those with Skull-masters. Their leader is Terry Boot who helps make the Skull-masters and is part of the Enchanters Guild. Terry follows Harry and then Seamus' orders.

Necromancers are those that raised the dead. It was controlled by Ginny. She took orders only from Harry and requests from Seamus.

Elementalist is those that control the elements. Some Purgers are part of the Fire Elementalists but instead of staffs they use their Skull-masters as ways to cast spells. All of the Eclipse is in some part of it. Some Krakens are part of it but not many. Neville is the commander of the Elementalist. He takes orders from Harry and sometimes Seamus. He also learned military strategy, from muggles, so to better command them in battle.

Enchanters are those that make the weapons. Some battle with other groups but most don't. Leader is Cho Chang. They follow Harry's orders.

The Eclipse is the demolition experts. Their leader is Luna who follows Harry's orders then Seamus'. She is also part of the more destructive side of the Enchanters Guild.

The Kraken is the beast tamers organization. Their leader is Draco who follows Harry's orders then Seamus'.

The Sword fish are the assassins. Their leader is Blaise then Daphne. Both of who only take orders from Harry.

The Great White is the interrogation, slavery, and torture organization and is composed mainly of fear-casters. Their leader is Blaise and then Tracey. Both only take orders from Harry.

Chimera is living experiments that are used in battle. Whipstitch is the official leader but is commanded by Cho Chang so she is in command of this unit. She takes orders from Harry and then Seamus.

Misfits are creatures that have joined Harry, to find haven and take vengeance on the wizarding world that suppressed them. They ranged from werewolves, to vampires, to giants, to veela, to just about every other intelligent creature. Their leader is called Samuel and is a vampire. They take orders from Seamus and Harry.

Chapter 11

Dark as Light

From the front page of the Daily Prophet, Wizard newspaper, June 30th:

BROKEN ARMY RETURNS

Barely a day after setting out, the army of the Ministry returns from Lunas, bloodied, bruised, and barely alive, the 10 thousand strong army has returned with its numbers halved. According to the survivors, they were camped at Lake Gato when a wave of Corpse Hungers and Great Crocodiles stormed the beaches. However, that was not the worst attack upon the army. On the western side of the lake, where most of the commanding staff was housed, a disaster occurred, sometime early this morning; a Shatterstar was used to completely devastate the western shore. Every single person on the western side was killed, including the the general in charge, Alucard Integral, and his commanding staff.

Although this is obviously a Black Tide attack, something else seems to be at work here, in the eyes of this editor. The Beastkeepers were, by their own admission, targeted by an extremely light assault. Why were they spared? Luck of the draw? Fate? I think not.

If this is finger-pointing, so be it. I will point my finger, and stand my ground. I request that Walter Andrews, leader of the Beastkeepers at Lake Gato, be investigated for treason. I regard the fact that they were not attacked by any real force as significant evidence that he, or someone high ranking in Beastkeeper staff, were involved in this deadly assault.

As further evidence, I ask you to read these notes, found in his personal files by...

(article continued on page 2)

Alexander Ceras

Editor, Daily Prophet News

Jester's Keep, Oceania. June 30th. 2:00 a.m.

Harry put the newspaper down, sighed a sigh of contentment, and laid his head back on his throne, smiling. That should give the Ministry something to bother with for a while. The Beast-keepers had always been regarded as a strange, semi-legal portion of the Ministry army, and the regular army had always been leery of them, despite their repeated shows of bravery and valor. They hung in the balance, not damned outright but not accepted either. A single well-placed salvo could tip that balance and send them plummeting into darkness. Unfortunately for them, there was a very fiery, well-liked editor on the Daily Prophet who liked young ladies of sixteen or so, preferably naked. Tracey just so happened to have some that she then donated to him. Blaise was still getting used to her powers and had only just woken the week before. She had almost begged him to bring her somewhere where there was pain so that she didn't feel so empty.

Harry broke out laughing as he thought of Blaise begging. The throne room was mostly empty; it was the afternoon, and most of the soldiers in Oceania were busy building. The first children born under the banner of the Jester King were going to be arriving soon, and a hospital was being constructed to accommodate the young mothers and children. Padma had taken a particular liking to this task, and most of the foundation was made of pure rock and stone. She'd wanted to build the entire thing, but that was impossible. Certain flows of magic were enhanced or retarded by various things, and healing was one of them. Stone retarded it, but wood enhanced it. Why Hogwarts had a stone hospital wing was unknown to him as was why St. Mungo's was made of stone. The rest of the building was lumber, and the frame was already up. Not being able to build all of it with her magic, Padma had nonetheless helped by creating golems to help cut the trees for lumber and place them on the half-finished structure.

It wouldn't be St. Mungo's, but with the nurturing aura of Earth helping it, it would serve just fine for their needs.

Those few servants in the throne room ignored Harry. Most of the soldiers in Oceania, particularly the older veterans, were used to his laughter by now. It no longer bothered them.

[You really can get used to anything], Harry mused as he watched his servants. He was currently in human form, but the glitter of the Jester shone in his eyes.

In front of him, Cho, who had been talking with some of her Enchanters, dismissed them. As they left, the various weapons or armor pieces they'd brought for inspection clanking as they walked out of the throne room, she stood up and walked over to Harry's throne. She sat down in her seat on the table in front of it that was made for the Ebony Flame. She wrapped her arms around herself, and said.

"Lord," Cho said, voicing her seriousness, "Our forces are readily supplied and we could supply another thousand at least. But my lord I must ask if you would consider a proposition I have?"

Harry chuckled, his arms on his throne. "And what is that?"

Cho looked a little uncomfortable and then got up and whispered in his ear. "That you allow me to use some of the slaves that Tracey is collecting and reprogram them to help make more things." Blaise's awakening had caused a lot of people to gain either masochistic or sadistic traits. He also learned that she also was the Jester of Pain and even he was affected well in human form. Cho gained sadistic traits and wanted to experiment.

"Ah, lots of people are asking similar things." He chuckled once more, "yes you may collect, and reprogram some slaves to help you make more armor for the armor or even some of your Chimera."

She grinned, a wolf-like grin that spread across her face. "Why thank you my lord. If you want anything simple ask me. I will leave you now." She walked away with swaying hips.

Darkness came up from the floor at his feet. He was soon consumed by it. He reappeared near his room right next to Blaise. She was going to need to learn to control her powers more.

In the main hall, the servants looked at each other and shrugged. They kept cleaning; the only noise the soft whisper of brooms against the floor. The scene was common these days. One of the ebony flame ask for some slave to torture/kill/practice on/experiment

on/eat/feed to animals/use as target practice.(guess which organization asks for what)

Voldemort's Fortress, England. Same time.

Voldemort rubbed his temples. He couldn't believe what he was about to do. If, during the first war, someone had told him that one day he would join up with the bloody *Ministry* of Magic, he would have laughed his head off- and then killed them. But now, he had no choice. He could not fight a war on two fronts. [Although,] part of his mind commented, [it seems Harry is doing just fine, but then again I don't have his resources].

He called Wormtail to him with his mind, mentally summoning the sniveling bastard. Like the pitiful, kicked dog, although not nearly as cute as a dog, he was, Wormtail crawled into the room through the open door, pathetically eager to please- and even more pathetically ready to dodge if Voldemort should go off on him. Voldemort sighed. Murphy's Law was right. If it can go wrong, it will. The "can" happened to be worthless servants; the "will" was looking right at him.

Voldemort looked at Wormtail, watched him quiver under his gaze for a while, then said, "I have something special for you."

Wormtail looked at his master, eager to accept but afraid of danger. He peered forward from his eternally hunched-over look and, like a child placing its hand towards a dog to see if it will bite, cautiously said, "What is it, master?"

Voldemort wondered briefly what jumping up and screaming like a madman would do to Wormtail. Probably kill him with a heart attack, no doubt. Part of him wanted to try, just to see the sniveling coward's reaction. His mind began instantly contemplating turning the thought into action. He readied himself to spring and yell...

[Focus on business,] he thought to himself. Voldemort was not used to restraining his urges, and as the Dark Lord had never had too. But now, he must focus if he was to regain his former status and exile this young upstart from the world. He turned and said to Wormtail, "Don't worry, I'm not going to kill you." [yet] He instead reached over and pulled open one of the drawers in his desk. He reached in among the various files and papers and pulled out a box.

Inside was a Polyjuice Potion, mixed with a Forever-Kiss potion. The resultant mixture would make the drinker become the person mixed with the Polyjuice potion permanently. The Forever-Kiss potion was hard to make, and expensive to boot, enough so that this was one of only two Voldemort had.

"You must drink this," Voldemort said, taking the glass potion vial out of the cushioned silk lining of the box and placing it on the edge of the desk, "and go to the Ministry. You must go there and make our case to the Wizengamot. We need allies..."

"Sir!" Wormtail said, shocked. "But... there's no way they'd ever consider allying with us!" He seemed offended by the very suggestion. [Scared witless, too,] Voldemort thought, his dislike of Wormtail deepening.

"Oh, they won't know it's us," Voldemort said, smiling his reptilian smile at the thought of approaching the Wizengamot with such an offer. The stone-cold faces of its members would go slack as they all had a stroke at the exact same time. "They'll think we're an American Wizarding agency, newly arrived in Europe to deal with this crisis." He put extra emphasis on that last word. "A goodwill mission, if you prefer."

And that would work. The European and American wizards were not friendly, but not enemies either; they were neutral, each group caught in its own power struggles and internal battles, too preoccupied to deal with each other. Only a few major events (such as the battle between the M1A1 Abrams and the mating dragon pair Mr. Weasley had been so interested in) brought the two into contact with each other. Europe wouldn't bother checking to see if this new organization actually existed or not.

"Your orders are here," Voldemort said, pushing a small envelope towards him. "Burn the contents when you've read it." Wormtail picked up the letter, then gazed at the Polyjuice potion lying on the edge of the desk. "And remember," he said, smiling, "you're a salesman now."

"A salesman of what?" Wormtail said. "What am I selling to these wizards and witches?"

"Why, the organization known only as Coyote," Voldemort said, still grinning his reptile grin.

Wizengamot, Ministry of Magic headquarters, July 10.

Amelia Susan Bones, looking less like a Minister than a scarecrow that has been badly abused, sighed as she pulled herself forward in her chair. By the gods, she was cold inside. The disaster at Lake Gato would have been bad enough if it was only a military matter; now it had worsened into an economic and political fiasco as well. A Daily Prophet editor named Alexander Ceras had unleashed a floodtide equal to that which had surged forth from Lake Gato after the battle, calling the battle the "Lake of the Damned" and unleashing a media frenzy. Every single self-respecting editor and reporter had instantly seized this new moniker, turning what would have normally been only a horrifying disaster into the worst military crisis in history. Alexander Ceras' lurid, almost obscene descriptions of the battle had caused the Prophet to be bombarded with owls from adults who had trouble sleeping for the dreams they inspired. The pictures he had, pictures of the battle from a "hidden source" (the hidden source was Harry Potter; they'd simply recreated the scenes using their magics and Neville's memory to make them as realistic as possible), were printed and caused an even bigger uproar. But all of it paled compared to his greatest achievement.

The people of the Ministry didn't want to believe that a bunch of teenagers with swords (as they thought of the Tide and Shore) could manage something of this magnitude. They didn't want to know the truth, which made them quite eager to accept a lie.

Alexander Ceras had engaged in the finger pointing that all newspaper editors engage in from time to time; the difference here was that he was not only pointing at a person, but at a, to use a Muggle term, smoking gun as well.

The Beast-keepers were not well respected by the army, even in the most equitable of times. Their odd bond with their animal companions made them outcasts, freaks among wizards. So they made a natural scapegoat for the people... and Alexander Ceras was more than happy to supply the rope to hang them with.

In his very first editorial, he had made the outline of his case. Even Amelia, who thought the man a dangerous firebrand, had to admit

his skill. The bastard had the finest writing technique she'd ever come across. He made his outline in the first editorial, leaking out just enough information to pique everyone's interest in article 2. Then, writing like his small section of the newspaper was a mystery novel, he began relaying facts about the early life and history of the formerly unknown leader of the Beast-keepers, Walter Andrews, and the history of the Beast-keepers as well, pointing out hideous disasters in their history, all of which were true (though he failed to mention the fact that the regular army had a list of complete failures three times as long and twice as horrifying). He promised more in his next article, and there was more. And more. And more.

He kept building up the suspense, leaving his audience hungry for the next installment, the next set of clues. With each article he painted another brushstroke of Walter Andrews, who in personal life was a calm, humble man, as a monster hiding behind a gentleman's facade. He painted the Beast-keepers as feral animals, little better than the monsters they commanded, bearing a grudge against Wizard-kind and more than willing to exercise it. He pointed at various experiments with Corpse Hungers that Walter Andrews had participated in, at the various times when Beast-keeper charges went out of control at strangely opportune moments for the Beast-keepers. One such case, a stampede that had killed several Ministry employees, had occurred when the Beast-keepers were seeking better pay. The Ministry had quickly complied after the accident. The absolute coincidence was made, by Alexander Ceras' damning pen, to look like a carefully planned and orchestrated move. The Ministry was receiving letters by the trainload, asking for the court martial and investigation of Walter Andrews, and some even calling for his hanging. Even more asked for the disbanding of the Beast-keepers, and many- too many, Amelia thought- asked for their exile from the Ministry, with death as the punishment for those who would not leave.

The Daily Prophet was raking in the cash, selling more newspapers than it ever had before. Alexander Ceras was already a shoe-in to become editor of the year, and several other well-known publications had offered him exorbitant amounts of money to join their publications. He was a star, and milking it for all it was worth.

Amelia had tried to stop the floodtide, but in the end her dam of words was nothing compared to the rush of ink from Alexander's pen. She could do nothing before the public's outrage. Today, barely

a few hours ago, Walter Andrews had been arrested and brought to trial. The Wizengamot didn't even bother with the formalities of a full military court; everyone, including Walter, knew that this was a farce. They all knew that the outcome had been decided long before, had been decided by the flame and fire of one man's pen, far away. He had come in full military dress, and when the two guards moved forward after the verdict of guilty had been read to the charges of "treason and malicious intent towards the Ministry of Magic" to rid him of his military costume and cast him into shame, he had stood and said nothing. His newly nude form had been shackled and delivered directly into the cells of the Ministry, to await his execution in the morning. He had not said one word during all this. He intended to go with dignity.

To say that the Beast-keeper legions were in an uproar was an understatement akin to saying that California is prone to earthquakes; it was boiling, seething with newfound hatred and rage. Many Beast-keepers had thought that Walter Andrews was the answer to their prayers. A kind, honorable, dignified man, he was every bit the perfect English gentleman. His aura of greatness was an almost sure-fire way to counter the negative image the Beast-keepers had gained over the years as slovenly, bestial creatures. His very uprightness, his essential *humanity* would ensure their eventual acceptance into the military and, thereafter, the greater Wizarding community. His ascension to commander of the Beast-keeper legions had been a major step forward for them.

Or so they thought.

Instead, this model of a man had been thrown down, crushed beneath the brutal heel of repressed public prejudice. Unknown to her, Harry Potter personally found it funny; an intelligent, thinking man hunted down by stupid, ignorant beasts. Quite funny, really.

The Beast-keeper legions were almost ready to start a civil war. Not three weeks ago, they had been standing on the brink of acceptance; now every Beast-keeper was advised to travel with a group, so as to avoid the assaults of an outraged public. Insults had been slung on them, sometimes mud, sometimes rocks. Sometimes worse. One was killed when a man bearing the unfortunate combination of prejudice and magical knowledge attacked him in the streets. The fireball that erupted forth from the man's wand had

caught the Beast-keeper on fire. No one bothered to help the dying man.

The White Shore was horrified that the Ministry and its people could be in such a state. Hermione Granger, the Snow Lady, had summed up the White Shore's feelings before the Wizengamot, at her last official meeting with them, by saying "How can we trust you? You turn against your own people in prejudice and blind ignorance. How can we trust such dishonorable people?" They were considering pulling out of their alliance with the Ministry. Feelings were running high in the frozen north-west, hot and feverish thoughts of betrayal and stolen trust. No White Shore soldier would ever trust a Ministry man after this latest fiasco. Hermione herself had left, heading back to Durmstrang, after making her speech before them. Alexander Ceras hadn't touched on that yet, but he had mentioned in today's newspaper that he was "very interested in the conduct of some of our allies" and would "research the matter further tomorrow." His next article would surely be a blistering assault on the White Shore.

Amelia stopped thinking to pause and consider for a second the strangeness of it all. The Ministry on the brink of civil war. The White Shore pulling out. The Black Tide winning its battles. And now, the strangest thing she'd done so far in a very strange career and something new for her as well.

Sending an assassin at Harry Potter.

Before her stood Kingsley Shacklebolt, a man who was so loyal that he had become the personal assassin of the Ministry and who was the only one they'd found who had all the right qualities: experience, loyalty, and best of all, extreme cunning. What he was about to do was going to take every drop of that last he had.

"Kingsley Shacklebolt," Susannah said, her voice far older than it had been a millennia ago, when Fudge still sat in the seat she now occupied, "we have called you here for a special task."

"I stand ready for anything," Shacklebolt said, his head high and proud.

"I hope so," Susannah said, the coldness in her body and the icy laughter that always accompanied her digging in a little deeper,

laughing just a little louder, "we believe that you can be of great help to us. But this will require great sacrifice. Can you do it?"

Shacklebolt looked at her and said, "Whatever is required, I will give. My life, if need be."

Amelia almost smiled. She found it funny that Shacklebolt was so loyal thought that his life was his most important gift. The icy laughter and coldness in her had changed more than her attitude; it had changed her sense of humor. It was demented now, darkness and despair, twisted and warped. And the worst part was, she didn't even find it worrisome. Her sense of humor wasn't even close to being her top problem at the moment.

"Ah, but there's the rub. Would you give your very body for the Ministry?" Amelia asked, feeling uncanny humorous. Dark though it was, it gave her something to chuckle about, something to warm the frozen corridors of her heart.

"Ma'am?" Shacklebolt asked, genuinely puzzled. Other Wizengamot members looked at Amelia oddly, as if trying to understand their leader better. Amelia was enjoying herself.

"I'm asking," Susannah said, "if you will give your body to necromancy if necessary to kill your target."

Shacklebolt, understanding finally hitting him, said, "What..? You want me to kill someone who might kill me and then you want me to be reanimated to kill him."

"Yes, Shacklebolt, that's exactly what I mean. Understand?" Tonks who had been using her powers to look like Shacklebolt knew what would have happened to her if she had still been loyal to the Ministry. She would have been forced to become a whore for the Ministry to kill or get information on Harry.

A murmur ran through the Wizengamot. By all the gods, what was Amelia doing? This strange frankness wasn't like her. They stared at her, as if she had undergone some weird metamorphosis of her own and become a new creature entirely. She found her humor was becoming ever keener, ever sharper. She was, for the first time in weeks, enjoying herself.

"Mrs. Bones..." Shacklebolt trailed off, staring at the Minister. The blade of Susannah's humor sliced forth again.

"Every man sleeps you just need to wait till then to kill him," Susannah said, drawing a startled gasp from an elderly member of the Wizengamot. "Harry Potter will be no different. When he is asleep, kill him in bed and get the hell out. Report back to us here, tell us immediately, and speak of this with no one else. No superior commander, no friends, no one. This is strictly top-secret. Understand?"

Shacklebolt, stunned dumb, nevertheless managed to nod. Tonks, who was hiding behind his looks, looked ready to kill them all. She would report this all to Harry and then she would join his causes to destroy them all.

"You set out tomorrow. Your target is Oceania- we will provide transportation. Understand?"

"Yes," Shacklebolt managed. Tonks on the other hand would do everything in her power to kill everyone of these bastards as soon as she could. She would be buying a real Shatterstar and then having someone activate it.

The cold in Susannah dug deeper.

She found she no longer cared.

Laughter in the darkness was the only thing she heard.

Dungeons underneath Ministry of Magic headquarters, 11:30 p.m. that night.

Walter Andrews, a man who had sacrificed much in his life to help his people, was now going to die for crimes he had not committed. He took this as he took everything in his life- with dignity and honor. He would not stoop to a gibbering animal, begging for mercy, before the public. That's what they wanted. And he would be damned before doing such a thing. He sat in his jail cell, naked and cold, and did all he could do: he thought.

The four guards on his cell had laughed and cursed and spit at him. He had not eaten since breakfast that morning- he had gotten no

food here. The guard had laughed at him, and said, "This is for the soldiers you killed, you bastard!" He'd unzipped his pants and pissed in the soup that would have been Walter's last meal, and when he'd finished he'd kicked it into the cell bars, spreading it everywhere. Walter had simply moved aside and said nothing, only stared at the man with the knowledge that, though naked and in a jail cell, he was better than this pitiful excuse for a man. The guard had faltered under that stare, mumbled something about "freaks" under his breath, and turned away. That had been about twenty minutes ago. A different guard ambled towards the front of the cell, a sneering grin on his face. Again, Walter thought, the fools mock me. Pathetic creatures. This one strongly resembled a Muggle star named James Dean, with a slightly wider face. His blue eyes portrayed his supreme arrogance.

The guard opened his mouth and said, "Hey, you beast. Cold in there are you? Shaking in your boots? Oh yeah, forgot. You don't have any boots." He sniggered with laughter. Walter just stared at him, holding on to his essential dignity, a gentleman no matter what the cost. "Yeah, you just stand there and be cool. You'll scream in the end. You know how they do it, don't you? They eviscerate you." The man made a ripping, tearing sound, grossly exaggerated. The other guards laughed. "Cut your stomach open and rip out your organs, one by one. They keep you enchanted while they do it, just to make sure you don't get out of the game too soon, you know?" He chuckled again. "You'll scream, like all the others."

"I highly doubt it," Walter said, his face that of a baron viewing his lessers and not a nude man in a prison cell facing his guards.

The guard's face twisted into an ugly sneer. "Yeah right, you bastard. You go on doubtin' it. Right up until they rip your intestines out on the end of a long steel knife. You just go right on, doubtin' it." He walked back to the other guards, sure in his arrogance. Yeah, he was better than some Beast-keeper. Yeah, he was cool, he was tough. He sauntered back to the others.

Another guard, the same one that had pissed in his soup, turned and began saying, "Shouldn't have let you bastards in the army. Ruined everything. Stink the place up. Maybe now we can clear you out and leave more room for real men!" The guards all barked their laughter.

"And you consider yourselves real men?" Walter asked, lowering one eyebrow.

Their laughter stopped short, in mid-bark. They all turned to him, faces angry. One, who had a thick, bulbous nose and ugly face to match, said "You talking tough to me, man? Cuz I sure as hell don't see you breaking out of those bars. You can't talk to me like that."

"Why not?" Walter said. "I will talk to you as I see fit. You're not men. You're just little boys playing dress-up with daddy's uniform." Walter turned, the epitome of dignity, brushing them off as if they had been rude guests at his house and not his jailors.

The guard who had used his soup as a toilet had had enough. He pulled his gauntlet on tighter, cracking his knuckles for theatrical effect. "Yeah, we'll see about that. I'll show you who's a little boy. Got a present for ya, beast lover." He walked forward, fist raised, the rune stone that was the key for the cell pulsating slowly in his left hand. "Teach you to talk to real men like that, you dirty beast."

"You won't if you have any idea what's good for you," a voice from behind him said. A sword point, razor sharp, was pressed against the back of his neck. "Turn around slowly," the voice advised, the point pressing in just a little to emphasize the words. "Try anything, and I'll slit your throat."

The guard stopped dead, fist raised as his mind pondered what had just happened. His thoughts were almost visible on his face as he ran off his options. He eventually decided that his life was more important than his reputation as a real man. He turned around slowly. He goggled at the sight before him, eyes going huge. The sword point now below his Adam's apple was not the only strange thing here.

The other three guards were in similar positions. One was on the floor, holding his hands to his crotch and laying on the floor, gasping. Another was flat to the wall, a sword blade placed across his neck. The last guard was completely unconscious, blood trickling from his scalp. The boot that had caused his impromptu nap prodded his body, producing a groan. Satisfied that the guard was still alive, the owner of the boot stepped over him.

The four who had broken in and subdued the guards with such ease and stealth were quite the sight to behold. Their clothing was strange- it was white, a color that should have been easily noticed, but for some reason his eyes seemed to want to jump away from them, as if it had been diverted. With a sense of dread, he recognized the tell-tale effects of a Not-Here spell. Not-Here spells, the kissing cousins of Invisibility spells, were popular among assassins and thieves. Not-Here spells made the eye move away from the target, to find something else to look at, to not notice anything amiss. They were not invisibility cloaks, but they were close, and actually better when dealing with humans not animals at all because of their other senses. Invisibility cloaks just made you impossible to see; Not-Here made you seem to not exist to humans.

These people would have been impossible to spot. But Ministry technology should have spotted them anyway... how did they get in?

"How did you get in here?" the guard demanded. "You can't..!"

He drew in his breath sharply, as a likewise sharp point touched his bobbing Adam's apple. "I wouldn't talk much," the owner of that sword said. "It's not conducive to a long life."

The clothing itself was tight-fitting, close to the body. The only thing a Not-Here spell couldn't mess with was the sense of touch, hearing, smell and taste; being touched by a person under such a spell would allow you to see them normally and you could still hear them but you wouldn't spot them, a dog would still smell them but wouldn't be about to spot them though that wouldn't stop a guard dog from attacking them. So the clothing had been designed so as not to accidentally brush someone's passing arm. The face was covered in a white mask, much like an oriental ninja's hood- but unlike the black facemasks of those dark warriors of night, this white mask covered everything. There were no eyeholes- it was simply blank, a tight-fitting shroud on the face. Another spell must be on it, the guard thought. So they could see. He noticed with a sinking feeling that he had just pissed his pants. Even though he'd just peed in Walter's soup, enough was left to trickle down his leg. He was too scared to notice.

"The key," the masked warrior said. The guard, scared as he had never been before, opened his left hand and letting the rune key drop from it. He realized belatedly that these must be Beast-keepers,

sent to rescue Walter. They had been told to expect this, but they were real men. What did real men have to fear from a group of beast lovers? He overwhelmed the odd thought that passed through his mind, [What if I ain't a real man?] he'd thought, in a strange moment of real intelligence, with false bravado.

"You a bunch of beast lovers too, ain't you?" he said, full of himself now and trying a macho act that was grossly incongruous with the situation. "Yeah. Figured you bastards would try somethin' like this. We gonna kill every one of you, ya here? Kill every damn one of you." He grinned, trying to prove his toughness.

The warrior in front of him kicked him so hard in the stomach that he forgot all about his toughness. He simply fell over, tears streaming out of his eyes. The warrior in front of him raised his sword hand in front of his chest, sword tip aiming out at his left shoulder and blade across his chest.

"Pathetic," the soldier said. "You are sickening. I expected better from a Ministry soldier. And no, we're not Beast-keepers." He raised the sword higher, away from his chest. "I should kill you here," he said, looking down at the man and clenching his sword tighter. The guard, tears streaming out his eyes, blubbered for mercy as best he could, the breath knocked out of him by the force of the kick.

A second warrior turned to him. "Sir, I don't think this is a good idea..."

The first held his hand out. "Hold on."

He struck hard, the pommel of his sword rapping out and knocking the guard out. The guard hit the floor hard, and stayed there. The first warrior turned to the others.

"Knock'em out."

They did so, using pommels and feet to pile the remaining guards on the rather cramped floor. The guards offered little resistance to gravity as they sunk low and hit the floor.

Stooping and picking up the key, Kaleb Isaacs turned to his fellow white-clad White Shore soldiers. He went to Walter's cell and opened the door. "Sir, we've come to rescue you."

Walter looked at them, much like a gentleman viewing an interesting display. "Who are you, young sir?"

Kaleb smiled under his white mask. "The White Shore. And we want to offer a new home to you. It's cold in the north, but infinitely more hospitable."

Walter smiled. "Then north it is."

He stepped out of the cell, not embarrassed at all by his nakedness. He strode out, pausing only to look at the guards in the cell. He chuckled then and walked on.

Bountries on the Black Tide

Harry Potter (600 Thousand Galleon Dead from Ministry. 300 thousand Galleon Dead from Voldemort) "The Jester King" or "The Jester of Madness"

Seamus Finnigan (160 Thousand Galleons Alive/Dead, Ministry. 175 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 100-Thousand Dead, Voldemort) "The Black General"

Ginny Weasley (150 Thousand Galleons Dead, Ministry. 175 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 100-Thousand Dead, Voldemort) "Lady of the Dead" or "The Black Lady"

Blaise Zabini (150 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 120-Thousand Dead, Ministry. 195 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 100-Thousand Dead, Voldemort) "The Jester of Pain"

Neville Longbottom (150 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 120-Thousand Dead) "Master of Water"

Padma Parvati (150 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 120-Thousand Dead) "Queen of Earth"

Draco Malfoy (145 Thousand Galleons Alive/Dead, Ministry. 150 Thousand Galleons Alive/100-Thousand Dead, Voldemort.) "King of Beasts"

Luna Lovegood (145 Thousand Galleons Alive/Dead) "Lady of Destruction"

Terry Boot (145 Thousand Galleons Alive/Dead, Ministry. 175 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 100-Thousand Dead, Voldemort) "Lord of Hellfire"

Samual (145 Thousand Galleons Dead) "Lord of Misfits"

Cho Chang (145 Thousand Galleons Alive/Dead) "Lady of Monstrosity"

Fleur Delacour (140 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 120-Thousand Dead) "The Metal Winged Lady"

Wedge (130 Thousand Alive/ 110 Thousand dead) apprenticed under Terry Boot. NKN

Richard Spithe (130 Thousand Alive/ 110 Thousand dead) "Secondary General"

Alex Vicks (130 Thousand Alive/ 110 Thousand dead) "Secondary General"

Victoria Heavenwalker (140 thousand dead) "the Heart Striker"

Current organizations in Black Tide.

Marauders are the basic soldier and terror squad. Their leader is Seamus who only takes orders from Harry or Blaise depending on the situation. His second in command is Vick and Spithe.

Purgers are those with Skull-masters. Their leader is Terry Boot who helps make the Skull-masters and is part of the Enchanters Guild. Terry follows Harry and then Seamus' orders.

Necromancers are those that raised the dead. It was controlled by Ginny. She took orders only from Harry and requests from Seamus.

Elementalist is those that control the elements. Some Purgers are part of the Fire Elementalists but instead of staffs they use their Skull-masters as ways to cast spells. All of the Eclipse is in some part of it. Some Krakens are part of it but not many. Neville is the

commander of the Elementalist. He takes orders from Harry and sometimes Seamus. He also learned military strategy, from muggles, so to better command them in battle.

Enchanters are those that make the weapons. Some battle with other groups but most don't. Leader is Cho Chang. They follow Harry's orders.

The Eclipse is the demolition experts. Their leader is Luna who follows Harry's orders then Seamus'. She is also part of the more destructive side of the Enchanters Guild.

The Kraken is the beast tamers organization. Their leader is Draco who follows Harry's orders then Seamus'.

The Sword fish are the assassins. Their leader is Blaise then Daphne. Both of who only take orders from Harry.

The Great White is the interrogation, slavery, and torture organization and is composed mainly of fear-casters. Their leader is Blaise and then Tracey. Both only take orders from Harry.

Chimera is living experiments that are used in battle. Whipstitch is the official leader but is commanded by Cho Chang so she is in command of this unit. She takes orders from Harry and then Seamus.

Misfits are creatures that have joined Harry, to find haven and take vengeance on the wizarding world that suppressed them. They ranged from werewolves, to vampires, to giants, to veela, to just about every other intelligent creature. Their leader is called Samual and is a vampire. They take orders from Seamus and Harry.

Chapter 12 Madness

Bleak Justice

Jester's Keep, Oceania, July 13. 12:00 p.m.

Seamus looked up, from his position on the hill below it, at the massive form of the Jester's Keep. It was being constructed at an amazingly rapid pace, and even now the third floor was being finished. Padma had offered to help, but Harry had rejected her. Magically constructed buildings were generally weaker than those made by hand, and Harry wanted the keep as strong as possible. "Keep" was a bad name for it, though; it was starting to take on the aspect of a castle. Gazing at it, it was easy to believe the immense power of the Jester. Seamus shook his head. Amazing, simply amazing, that anyone could do this so quickly.

Seamus turned and continued walking down the path, it looked like a dirt path, but an invisible cushion made it flat and smooth, from the keep to Oceania. He had a personal mission today, one he had planned for a long time. He had even asked Harry for the day off so that he could do it. One he had dreamed of, for so long, even before becoming the Black General. A shiver of pleasure ran down his spine as he thought of that. Ah, yes, The Black General, such a beautiful title.

As he walked, he passed many residents of Oceania who were new to him; so many were streaming in that Cho, who had become the official Census-Taker, was swamped with work. Almost every person coming in was under twenty years old, and even the ones older than that were usually under twenty five. The Tide had become a strange sort of "youth group" to the Wizarding community. Thinking this, Seamus chuckled to himself. Youth group, indeed. This particular youth group had little to say on the matters of good habits and respect, and much to say on how to kill others for pay and pleasure, how to torture someone into a completely blank slate, how to tame the most dangerous of beasts and used them to kill others or even spy, how to enchant armor and weapon to become the most deadly things on the planet, how to make dangerous mixtures that could kill hundreds, how to eat people, how to bring people back to life with hunger unlike anything before, how to control the elements, how to make explosions into works of art, and how to

make monstrosities, not to mention the ever more important goal of world domination at hand.

As Seamus walked, one girl caught his eye in particular. Seamus had never seen such a pretty girl. Her hair was the red of a campfire, her eyes a bright, lively green. Her lips were full and sensuous; her face had high cheekbones and a nose in perfect proportion with each other, her breasts full, and her hips wide. She had attained a state of bodily perfection, and she perked Seamus' interest, along with many other less mentionable things. His head turned to watch her as she walked and he wasn't alone; half the street was staring at her, and he was about to put his quest on hold and follow her when a falsely sweet voice interrupted his train of thought.

"Staring, Seamus? You'll soon be known as the Lusting General if you don't watch it. Generals are famous for it, you know. All that killing makes a man a horny dog."

Turning, he saw Ginny perched on a nearby stone. Her knees were bent out, her hands between her feet her body bent forward with the wings swept back almost like she was about to take flight. All in all, she resembled nothing so much as a gargoyle. Her face held the little cocky smirk he had known would be on it even before he turned. Her shadow looked almost unnatural in that even though she didn't move, it did (those that have DND monster manual 1 try guessing what it is). She was a rarity among the population because she focused solely on her branch of magic instead of spreading more out. He thought it had something to do with how much versatility there is to necromancy.

"Indeed it does," he said, raising an eyebrow at her. "Besides, you're just jealous."

"Oh, please. We're all just so... much... bone... blood... organs... and fat." She had punctuated this last with an extremely disorienting head spin. Her face had started turning towards the side, and then, in complete defiance of natural law, as she was anything but, had spun on around until her chin pointed towards the sky and her hair spilled down to the ground. Her smile remained the same, though turned upside down and looking almost like a frown. Besides her neck and head, no other part of her body had moved. Seamus, who had seen so much horror, still felt a measure of shock at this. He

blinked at her, and she broke out into a laugh when she saw his expression of dumbfounded-ment.

"Didn't expect this one, did ya?" she said, head still unnaturally turned upside down. "Oh, you'd be surprised what positions I can get into."

"Most of them in the bedroom or battlefield," Seamus said, the shock having worn off. Although, he noted, it was very weird to be looking into someone's eyes when their head was upside down.

"Oh, touché, how witty" She rolled her eyes, her eyes going down first and then up. "Of course, we could try and see what it leads to on either..." she leaned forward, head still upside down, lips parted in a smile. Her face was several feet from him, but Seamus got the idea.

"My dear," he said, a smirk on his lips, "there are enough diseases to pick up from having sex with living people who have all their body's functions still working. What in the name of all the gods would I pick up screwing dead ones with most of said body's functions not?"

Ginny broke up at this. Her head reassumed its natural position with another sickening roll he even thought he heard a low crunch sound, as her laughter rang out. "Oh, thank you, Seamus," she said, still laughing as she rolled her eyes. "That just makes me feel great. You're so kind to the dead girl."

Seamus snorted at this. "I can't believe this. What was that Muggle movie, "Sixth Sense?" Instead of "I see dead people," my theme could be "I screw dead people.""

Ginny laughed again at this, and her eyes were squeezed so tightly as she laughed that, if any tears had come to the surface, they would have immediately been pushed outside. But Ginny could not cry, could never cry. It was an ability lost to her, as lost as her innocence.

Not that she missed, or ever wanted, either of these things very much.

Still chuckling, she flapped her wings once and deftly leapt off the rock. She stood up and said, "Where are you going this fine day? Besides at that girl's panties, I mean." She also absently noted that said girl was heading up the road Seamus had come from.

Seamus shook his head. "A personal thing, I've got someone to kill."

Ginny cocked her head, and for a moment Seamus expected her head to slip and turn upside down again. Natural law apparently won out for the moment, and it was with a normally positioned head that Ginny said, "Really? What fun. May I come with you? I'm rather bored today and anything besides pissing off Draco will do for now." Her wings rustled, as if in anticipation of the coming excitement.

"Well," Seamus said, about to say no when a thought struck him. Ginny was his best friend, a kind of dark soulmate for him, Soldiers who had seen them together during the Forest of Spears battle had taken to calling Ginny the "Black Lady". So why not take her? Let her see the darkness of his soul, the pain he'd carried so long. Maybe open up just a little, a small crack into his greatest secret.

He almost let her come. But, then again, there are some secrets too deep for light to ever shine on them. Not that there was any light in him anymore.

"No. Sorry, Ginny, but this is personal."

Ginny hung her head down, hair drooping. "Oh, can't I come? Please? I'm so bored..."

Seamus shook his head. "Sorry. I have to do this on my own."

She sighed dramatically, and said, "All right. Guess I'll have to find someone else to play with." She turned and started walking up the road to the Jester's Keep, her wings wrapped about her shoulders like a cloak. Seamus figured she'd go bother Harry or Draco or some other member of the Ebony Flame. He turned and kept walking down the road. Soon, he disappeared behind the recently completed Mountain Rest hospital; it would be officially unveiled tomorrow. Padma was being instated as the first official Director of the school. She already had a group of healers ready to work, and not a moment too soon- the first child was expected in a month, the healthy child of a sixteen year old Purger and an eighteen year old

Fire Elementalist. (You can guess which one is having it and which would have caused the more damage)

As soon as Seamus disappeared around the corner of the building, Ginny flapped her wings and left the ground. Her leathern wings beat the air and for a while she struggled, feet barely off the ground. Then, a breeze came by, aiding her, and soon she was soaring into the air above Oceania. She swooped down on top of the hospital and crouched there, not unlike a bird, peering down at Seamus as he left Oceania's main path. He was heading to Firion's Gate, it looked like, odd because he next to never left Oceania to see to their allies. That was more Blaise's role then anything he would do. He was not a social person these days; she thought it had something to do with too much testosterone or adrenaline.

She flapped her wings, and with a breeze to aid her, followed Seamus from above. Whatever he was doing, she wanted to be there to watch.

Terrier Street, London, England. 6: 15 p.m.

Terrier Street, named after those famous breeds of dogs, had garnered its unusual name because of a strange pack of dogs that had lived there years ago. Around 1954, a pack of wild rat terriers had come to reside in this area, when it was still mostly rubble and poor housing. People took to calling it "That Terrier pack's street", and the name was shortened into Terrier Street, which proves nothing, except the fact that anything, even a pack of wild rat terriers, can gain a short immortality in some way.

On this street, there was a house, numbered 1141. This house was where a man named Johnathan Finnigan lived, with his wife Anna. It was a place that Seamus had lived in, during those hellish months when Hogwarts School was out. It was here that he was heading. On his couch in the brown living room, Johnathan drank another glass of vodka, his third that hour, and read the Daily Prophet. The article he was currently reading, another excellent piece by Alexander Ceras, was a story about that monster Walter Andrews escaping his prison cell, abetted by other Beast-lovers. Johnathan's opinion, formed from few facts and much speculation, was nevertheless rock-hard. Maybe it was the fact that his son was now among the most wanted people in existence, maybe it was all that stress or shame or something, but at that moment he was

completely unshakeable in his belief, a belief he voiced in a hoarse, braying bellow.

"We should kill all these damn Beast-lovers!" he yelled out, so loud that the neighbors would have heard it if the house, not unlike that of Privet Drive Number 4, was it not sound-proofed with magic. "Bloody freaks are ruining this country!"

His wife, a stern woman named Elena whose face was so sharp looking in its angles that it resembled nothing more than a razor blade, sniffed and said, "I agree. That nice man, Mr. Ceras, was just reporting the victory we'd all won the other day when Walter was jailed, and now look what's happened. That monster Walter is freed, the Beast-keepers disappear entirely, the Black Tide is still on the loose and destroying things, and the White Shore just up and leaves the country because of some Beast-loving creatures. What is wrong with this world?" She shook her head sadly and walked into the kitchen, thinking that if people today were just a little more strict with their children, these things wouldn't happen. The whole White Shore and Black Tide, both of which she thought of as little children playing around, ideas would never have happened. It never occurred to her that her own child was among the most powerful people in the Tide, and his upbringing was nothing if not strict or that they had over 20,000 people supporting the Tide alone.

Johnathan was about turn around and continue reading the article from Mr. Ceras entitled, "Walter Andrews, Monster, recently escaped from jail" and subtitled with, "Why does the Ministry continue to fail us?", when he heard a knocking at the front door. Rising up and complaining loudly that people should write letters before arriving unexpectedly he walked to the small brown door and opened it, his stern, snobbish, arrogant face already beginning to spout out a retort. What he saw there caught him by surprise, and his mouth simply hung where it was, not unlike a codfish.

In full battle dress having had spelled himself with Not-Here, as all the Ebony Flame had been forced to learn it, when in London, and had just dismissed the spell when he got here, visor open so his father could see his face, Seamus Finnigan, the Black General of the Black tide, was staring his father in the face. Before his father could do more than gape and stare, Seamus put his hand on him and shoved. His father fell backwards his little more than half-drunken state no match for Seamus' battle-trained muscles. He

scattered the dining room as he staggered backwards, flinging the chairs and table around, only stopping when he hit the fridge. He stared at his son with wide-eyed horror and fear. Seamus stepped into the kitchen in the wake of his father's fall, closing the door behind him. He wanted no interruptions and any that caused it would see one pissed off Black General.

Johnathan stared up at his son, face trembling. His entire life he had used his son as a convenient whipping-boy for all his problems, taking what was inside himself, his drinking habit, for example one of his many problems, most of which had started up again, and taking it out on his son. It was good therapy for him. He had always wanted his son to be meek, to bow before him, and before the Tide started Seamus had always been obedient. But now, his son standing before him, his face visible through his helm, the mouth set in a grim line not unlike that of Ron "Old Grim" Weasley. Johnathan trembled. The figure before him exuded an aura of *command*, of self-confidence which Johnathan had tried to drive out of his son with constant beatings and more insidious, psychological abuses. This was not the posturing of a boy, come back to show Daddy how tough he was; this was the strength of a man, a very evil cruel man, but a man nonetheless. And this man had come back for revenge.

"You... you..." Johnathan said, gasping for breath. His heart was racing, racing. The effects of the vodka he had drunk dissipated before the strength of his fear of his son. He heard his wife, hearing the commotion, run into the dining room door- and stopped, staring, at what she saw. Seamus looked at both of them, and then smiled. It was not a smile either of his parents cared for much.

"Seamus," his mother said, her considerable calm and superiority gone, "what... what are... Why are you here?" Her voice trembled, her heart beginning to beat shakily, her whole body quivering.

"Simple enough, isn't it?" Seamus said, looking at them with the same look of innate superiority they had always held for him, "I'm here for revenge."

"Revenge?" his mother cried, standing in the door. "All we've ever done is feed you and put clothes on your back, and try to teach you the right way! And now," her hands fluttered, as if searching for answers in the air before them, "And now you go and join this little group or whatever it is..."

Seamus' laughter barked out, a harsh laugh that stopped his floundering mother, her hands slowly stopping in mid-air, her eyes widening in horror. Her son never interrupted her, never. Her world had subtly changed the world as she saw it slipping off balance.

"Little group? Little group! Oh, my dear, foolish mother. You have no idea what we are." He smiled, his grin the grin of a maddened wolf viewing its prey. "But you'll know. Soon enough, you'll know more than you ever wanted and you will see it all." He raised his hand, and the force of his magic began to roil about him, distorting the landscape of the dining room; big as a football field, now small as a closet. His voice came slower now, as his concentration sharpened to a fine point in the distance. "This is my power. This... is my strength... Time... matter... space... all... mine... to command... whenever I... wish it."

Ginny, watching outside under the cover of her own Not-Here spell, opened her eyes wide in shock. She knew what that spell was. She ducked low into the window, not wanting Seamus to see her and be distracted at this critical moment. She peered into the windows of the house, eyes wide. She would have held her breath, except for the fact that she didn't need to breathe anymore. As it was, she was unnaturally stiff, her body like a statue as she crouched low, fingers on the windowsill. What was happening inside, a son against his parents, was usually unnatural, but for some reason what was happening inside did not feel like sin to her. Odd. Maybe the real sin was what they'd done to him...

Inside, the room had started to spin. Seamus was calling on all his power to warp the very fabric of time and space. It was a Arc Infinitum spell, a spell so incredibly taxing on the bearer that Wizards over a hundred years of age were advised against casting it, for fear of their hearts stopping over the strain. Seamus, a fit, healthy young man, nevertheless felt the strain and pull on his heart and mind. He spent the next few days with a terrible headache, but the pain was a small price to pay.

For an Arc Infinitum spell gave you all the power of a Portkey without having to have one in the first place. They were untraceable, as well.

Falling through dream and nightmare, rushing towards reality, they fell...

Barracks' dungeon, Oceania, England. 1:00 p.m.

Four Black Tide soldiers stood at attention, swords out, visors of their Marauder helmets down, a vision of evil in black armor. The runes glowed in the darkness of the room. The curved edge of their swords faced the ground, tips pointing right, gleaming softly. They'd been told to wait for Seamus' arrival. They'd been here for fifteen minutes now, having been told to come at twelve forty five. None of them had complained about the wait. Seamus was a real man, a true leader, and their loyalty to him was unwavering.

The shadowy darkness of the room began to waver, a hole in time opening before their eyes. Purple bolts of energy flickered across this hole, a hole that opened onto a shifting, twisting stream of color that constantly changed. Through this opening, they had stood still. Seamus had asked for perfect stillness, perfect efficiency. They would not fail him.

Soon, through this portal, Seamus appeared, followed by his father and mother. They appeared insubstantial at first, almost not there, then solidified as the dream took hold of them once more. Johnathan fell, the supporting fridge no longer there, and in the darkness Elena screamed. What was happening? Where were they, and who were these

monsters

soldiers before her? They stood stock-still, their swords out. What in the world was going on here?

" Take them," Seamus said, his voice calm, " and tie them up, then leave us."

The men stepped forward as one, and in the gloom of the room they looked like the Four Horseman of the Apocalypse, sans horses, walking forward to wreck their ruin upon the world. Elena tried to fight, but an iron grip grabbed her wrist. A second hand grabbed her arm and dragged her backwards, towards what felt like an iron wall. As she struggled in vain, a second pair of hands grabbed her feet and shackled her to the wall. Soon her hands were tied too. Next to

her, her husband moaned as his terrified eyes switched back and forth between the soldiers in front of him. Their part finished, the men saluted Seamus and left in single file, in a perfectly neat row.

" You see," Seamus said, after they had left, " I've become something far greater than you'd ever imagine. And I want you to see it all. So I've arranged something for you..."

He laughed as a strange device, which oddly resembled an optometrist's glass changer with claws instead of eyeholes, came down from the ceiling and covered his mother's face. Her screams rang out into the sound-proofed room as the machine ripped her eyes out.

Bountries on the Black Tide

Harry Potter (600 Thousand Galleon Dead from Ministry. 300 thousand Galleon Dead from Voldemort) "The Jester King" or "The Jester of Madness"

Seamus Finnigan (170 Thousand Galleons Alive/Dead, Ministry. 175 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 100-Thousand Dead, Voldemort) "The Black General"

Ginny Weasley (150 Thousand Galleons Dead, Ministry. 175 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 100-Thousand Dead, Voldemort) "Lady of the Dead" or "The Black Lady"

Blaise Zabini (150 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 120-Thousand Dead, Ministry. 195 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 100-Thousand Dead, Voldemort) "The Jester of Pain"

Neville Longbottom (150 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 120-Thousand Dead) "Master of Water"

Padma Parvati (150 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 120-Thousand Dead) "Queen of Earth"

Draco Malfoy (145 Thousand Galleons Alive/Dead, Ministry. 150 Thousand Galleons Alive/100-Thousand Dead, Voldemort.) "King of Beasts"

Luna Lovegood (145 Thousand Galleons Alive/Dead) "Lady of Destruction"

Terry Boot (145 Thousand Galleons Alive/Dead, Ministry. 175 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 100-Thousand Dead, Voldemort) "Lord of Hellfire"

Samual (145 Thousand Galleons Dead) "Lord of Misfits"

Cho Chang (145 Thousand Galleons Alive/Dead) "Lady of Monstrosity"

Fleur Delacour (140 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 120-Thousand Dead) "The Metal Winged Lady"

Wedge (130 Thousand Alive/ 110 Thousand dead) apprenticed under Terry Boot. NKN

Richard Spithe (130 Thousand Alive/ 110 Thousand dead) "Secondary General"

Alex Vicks (130 Thousand Alive/ 110 Thousand dead) "Secondary General"

Victoria Heavenwalker (140 thousand dead) "the Heart Striker"

Current organizations in Black Tide.

Marauders are the basic soldier and terror squad. Their leader is Seamus who only takes orders from Harry or Blaise depending on the situation. His second in command is Vick and Spithe.

Purgers are those with Skull-masters. Their leader is Terry Boot who helps make the Skull-masters and is part of the Enchanters Guild. Terry follows Harry and then Seamus' orders.

Necromancers are those that raised the dead. It was controlled by Ginny. She took orders only from Harry and requests from Seamus.

Elementalist is those that control the elements. Some Purgers are part of the Fire Elementalists but instead of staffs they use their Skull-masters as ways to cast spells. All of the Eclipse is in some part of it. Some Krakens are part of it but not many. Neville is the

commander of the Elementalist. He takes orders from Harry and sometimes Seamus. He also learned military strategy, from muggles, so to better command them in battle.

Enchanters are those that make the weapons. Some battle with other groups but most don't. Leader is Cho Chang. They follow Harry's orders.

The Eclipse is the demolition experts. Their leader is Luna who follows Harry's orders then Seamus'. She is also part of the more destructive side of the Enchanters Guild.

The Kraken is the beast tamers organization. Their leader is Draco who follows Harry's orders then Seamus'.

The Sword fish are the assassins. Their leader is Blaise then Daphne. Both of who only take orders from Harry.

The Great White is the interrogation, slavery, and torture organization and is composed mainly of fear-casters. Their leader is Blaise and then Tracey. Both only take orders from Harry.

Chimera is living experiments that are used in battle. Whipstitch is the official leader but is commanded by Cho Chang so she is in command of this unit. She takes orders from Harry and then Seamus.

Misfits are creatures that have joined Harry, to find haven and take vengeance on the wizarding world that suppressed them. They ranged from werewolves, to vampires, to giants, to veela, to just about every other intelligent creature. Their leader is called Samual and is a vampire. They take orders from Seamus and Harry.

Jester's Keep, Oceania, July 14th. 11:00 p.m.

Harry stretched in his seat before his court, waiting for everyone to settle in. Running a city, particularly one growing as large as Oceania was (over a thousand people had streamed in just from Firion's Gate and Halley's Gambit, with a little over fifteen hundred coming in from other parts of England and having already four thousand to begin with), was a tiring, stressful job, but Harry was enjoying himself. Such fun, this power, no wonder Voldemort had tried to rule the world. This feeling of command, of strength, superseded everything Harry had ever felt before.

In those (to them) old days, when he had walked in light.

He snorted at this, reining in his laughter only with an effort. No. He had never walked in light. He had served light, been its poster boy, but not due to his own efforts. He had been thrust into that role, and there is no one whose hatred is quite as strong as those who, through the choices of others, are placed on one of the sides in the great struggle of Good against Evil. Harry had not been given a choice, but merely told to fight for Good, to believe in it. Harry wondered now what, if anything would be different if he had been allowed to make his choice. Would he have stayed with the silver white, stood in the rain? Or would he have done what he did now, thrown in his lot with the darkness of the soul, become the rain itself? Becoming the corruption of souls both far and near. He knew not, and part of him didn't want to know. Just thinking about it was delightful, and coming up with an answer would ruin all the fun in it.

But intellectual exercise could wait. He put that very interesting theological and psychological question away for another time, and began the meeting. Before he did, he glanced about the room, marveling at how well his mostly unskilled, novice architects had done, all things considered.

The meeting hall was on the second floor, a safety measure that had been the very first issue of their first meeting. Since it hadn't been complete at the time, they'd held their meetings in the banquet hall, but now that the second floor was finish and the third was being built they'd moved here. The second floor was the strongest defensive position in the fortress, and had the best fortifications for defense and offense. So, logically, they'd decided to move there, to avoid

catching the stray cannonball or lightning bolt hurled by any enemy who managed to get close enough to siege the keep. Safety lay in always thinking ahead, of being one step ahead of everyone else. It also helped that people always think that you would be in the highest tower or floor.

The room was rectangular, set in the middle of the second floor (the one change to the architect's plan Harry had made). It wasn't very long, for only the top staff would come here. The Ebony Flame, as Harry called them, consisted of a very few key members of his personal staff, and were also his closest friends. In every piece of literature he'd ever read, in every movie he'd ever seen, villains were always paranoid loners, but Harry had found that truth was different from fiction, and even stranger than it ever would be. The people about him were monsters (with the exception of one but she would join them soon enough in their monstrosity), no doubt about that and he was undoubtedly the worst of them all; but they were friends nonetheless. Friends whose Saturday night activities were more likely to include killing and robbing than talking about good books they'd read lately, but friends still. There was an unspoken code of honor in them, one that quietly declared that no promises made between them could be broken, that they would never harm each other in any way. Maybe that was the key to a dark utopia; honor, the very essence of Good itself, might be the beginning of an age of Evil, an even more interesting mental challenge than possible paths in his life.

But it, too, had to go on the back burner, despite being the seed of an idea that would conceive of an empire of purest darkness for Harry. He didn't know that at the moment, so he brushed it away casually, like an errant strand of hair. He refocused himself on the room.

Torches sat in the walls, smokeless torches that gave off far more light than a normal fire. The walls were bare, save for several maps (one of England, one of Oceania, one of Lunas, and various points of interest in between). Done up by Cho Chang with her magic, the maps grew and changed with the cities they represented and had some of the same spells as the marauders map in that it told you where everyone was. Even now, little bustling figures surrounded a structure outside Lunas, where the Necromancers were building a new piece of mining equipment in the Boneyard. Sometimes, Harry

would come up here and just watch the maps, watch his empire grow. It was with great pride that he looked on all he was creating, and at the same time, humbling too. This was his responsibility now, all these lives under him. It put a great weight on his shoulders, a weight he rather enjoyed carrying.

The table set in the middle of the room had a built-in magic map feature that created what Muggles would no doubt have called a "hologram". They used it to bring up ideas, strategic points, and anything else they wanted to look at. Seated on the north end of the table, furthest from the door, Harry sat, now dressed in a white shirt with a black vest over it, with a jester's hat (complete with laughing-skull tips) on the right breast. He was currently sitting with his right foot over his left knee, looking about the room. The lightning-bolt shaped scar on his face had strangely grown in the past few days, almost like it fed off the evil in his soul. It now reached the top of his nose, and looked more like a sword wound than a lightning bolt. Cho had once jokingly told him that if it kept growing, it would split his face in half. It actually did look like someone was slowly cleaving his head in two, using very sharp, invisible scalpels to carve his face. Harry thought it was entertaining to have such a disjointed look, and refused Cho's offers to try and fix the scar. It was an old friend of his, and he intended to keep it, no matter how long it got.

Seated to his right, Seamus Finnigan sat, wearing his usual black armor. Today, however, he wore a brand new chain about his neck, with a crystal ball dangling on the end. Inside it were two things, floating around. At first Harry couldn't figure out what they were, and then saw that two human eyeballs (one brown, one green) were magically floating in the crystal ball. Harry thought it strange, but wasn't going to comment on it. It wasn't like he had room to talk; he was the Jester of Madness and his love interest was the Jester of Pain, for heaven's sake, and wearing eyeballs was pretty tame compared to that. He had also enjoyed watching from Seamus' point of view well he got them. He also represented Terry who was currently in Lunas trying to sort out giants that continue to fight each other and near kill one another and bystanders.

Seated to Harry's left, Blaise sat. She was wearing just as much armor as Harry himself, none at all. Because of so few things being able to kill them they had near no regard for their safety and when such a thing able to kill them they go into red alert. She currently had a blood red dress that went to her knees. Her dress also had

the insignia of the Jester on her right breast. She looked more like royalty than Padma did in Harry's eyes. Her eyes had the hint of madness and lust for pain, as well as showing how dark her very soul was with that they had become completely black, instead of her old brown eyes. She currently had one hand on Harry's lap currently feeling him up, and he was doing nothing to stop her, and one on her own. She had also expressed interest in her lord, master and hopefully soon to be lover.

Seated to the left of Blaise, Samuel sat, wearing leather armor that looked like it had come from the century that Christ was born (and it very well could be). He had a blood red diamond hanging from his neck to protect himself from sunlight. He wore a leather trench coat and black pants. He also wore a red shirt under his leather armor. He had a regal face almost similar to that of Padma but much darker. He was undoubtedly the oldest member of the Ebony Flame, both in looks and actual age. He looked to be around 25 but from what Harry could gain from his talks with him, he had been around since a little before Christ. He was fanatically loyal to Harry because he hadn't been in a battle for near three centuries because of the hunting of his kind. He had a grin that spoke of his madness and showed his fangs with his crimson eyes glinting in the light. He was quietly talking with Blaise and Neville.

Next to Seamus, Ginny sat, her wings folded about her like a modest cloak. She'd already displayed her new head roll to everyone, causing both Harry and Neville to break out in laughter, and causing everyone else to either be shocked (Cho or Dora, for instance) or bemused (Seamus, who'd seen it before and Samuel, who could do such things as well). Padma had merely raised an eyebrow, utterly royal even in her confusion. Ginny's head was currently in the right position, and she was chatting with Seamus about protecting the Boneyard (since she had yet to set up shop in the other towns). She talked with her hands, a habit from before her undeath, one of the last traces of the girl she had been. They danced in the air, pale ivory and wicked nails, like corrupt birds in flight.

Past her, waiting with all the grace and calm of the Queen she was, Padma Parvati sat, her red hair streaming down her shoulders. The Orb of Earth, glowing contentedly, sat on her wrist. She waited patiently, her green eyes patient. She was a figure of majesty, almost (in her own way) like the Snow Lady Hermione. But there

was a difference there, a difference very subtle but just as fundamental despite that. It could not be explained, except that maybe Hermione shone with a brighter, purer majesty, while Padma's majesty came from the darkness that surrounded her. Her dragon guardians gone, Padma sat in her green robes, hands in a steeple in front of her chest. She was just sitting quietly.

Across from her, cracking his knuckles, Neville Longbottom, newly returned from Lunas, sat waiting impatiently, an exact opposite of regal, patient Padma. The Orb of Water, wrapped in eternal silent torment, pulsed on his forehead, thin veins covering it. Neville had changed during his trip, looking more and more like a bodybuilder who'd escaped his gym. His muscles rippled under the midnight blue suit he wore, and the long cape trailing from his shoulders shifted as he moved about impatiently. He had the status reports from Lunas, and was eager to get them out and over with. He was talking to Samual and listening to the others conversations to make sure no one betrayed Harry.

To his right, sat Luna, She was currently peacefully contemplating what would happen if she were to go to a nuclear factor and start casting her spell of madness before quickly going to save distant to watch the explosion. She wore a sundress with screaming plant faces attached to it. She was their most destructive individual. She had a dreamy look in her eyes as she sighed contently. She was grinning much like Samual and just as fanatically loyal as he was.

To the left of Padma and across from Luna, Cho Chang sat with her hands in her lap, waiting for her lord to call the meeting. She was resplendent in a beautiful rose red dress, the kind favored by old English royalty. Demure and lovely, she sat quietly, waiting with new figures for the Census and the latest reports from the smithies.

Across from and to the left of her, sat Draco. He looked as much the King of beasts as his nicknamed suggested him to be. He had grown scales on his hands and his finger nails and teeth had grown to be fangs and claws. He no longer needed armor because his scales covered his entire torso and limbs well leaving his face unmarked, but still wore it regardless. His cheekbones were being pulled back by magic to make him look more like a predator. He had gained a silted cat like eyes, and with his hair pulled back he fit the predator role just fine. He was currently grinning showing all of his

teeth that were made only for meat. He was talking and joking with Dora and Luna

At the end of the table sat one Dora Tonks formerly Nymphadora Tonks. She currently looked like a 23 year old girl that had a perfect figure with wide hips, a fine ass, and a nice bosom, and currently had neon green hair. She was wearing light Leather armor that amplified her nice bosom and made it apparent that she likes bondage very much. She fit the Nymph's roles just fine tell you saw her fight. When she fought she fought with the ferocity of a beast and with just as much, if not, more rage.

His informal survey complete, Harry tapped a small bell on his side of the table, producing a slight ringing sound. At this almost soundless cue, everyone looked at him. Harry cleared his throat and began the meeting.

"Time to get started everyone, new developments on the war front first, General Finnigan"

Seamus shuffled some of the paper in front of him, looking for one sheet in particular. The eyeballs rolled in the crystal ball, and for one moment Harry thought he could see a face in the brown one, a stern face that reminded him of Seamus somehow. But before he could ask, Seamus found the paper he was looking for and began.

"Okay. Good news first. The Ministry Military is starting to come apart at the seams. The Beast-keepers left after Walter Andrews was thrown into jail, and they've apparently moved north-east, to Durmstrang and our old friends, the White Shore." Seamus chuckled, shuffling some more papers. "The Ministry has closed off talks with the White Shore. Alexander Ceras has done more than get rid of part of the Ministry army for us; the crazy bastard managed to remove the alliance between them and Ron's group." Looking down at the paper, he continued on, saying, "Let's see... we managed to insert two spies into the Ministry, one an Earth Elementalist turned cockroach who snuck into the Wizengamot to spy, the other a Marauder who happened to steal an Invisibility cloak from Gringott's before we left. She's in the Muggle section, per your orders. The cockroach guy just sent in his first reports, and something very unusual has happened. He says that a big fat guy, who called himself Pettan Grew, came into the Wizengamot about three days ago. Started talking about an American Wizarding organization, a

group called Coyote. Said he was its representative that they had heard of the crisis over here and wanted to aid the Ministry. The cockroach guy threw in additional reports on known American groups, both Muggle and Wizard- scratch a spy, uncover an overachiever- and the only group called Coyote in the U.S. that he can find is a prostitute organization. And I very seriously doubt that they know or care what's going on here"

"Hmm," Harry said, stroking his chin, "very interesting. So, is his information is reliable"

"It is," Seamus assured him.

"Then who are they really? If our spy can do it, then surely the Ministry can figure out that they aren't really American Wizards come over the Big Pond to help out their English brethren. So why bother making up a lie that can be disproved so easily"

Seamus waved his finger at Harry, and said, "Our spy checked out known groups. There are many organizations we don't know about here in England, much less America. Plus, do you really think the Ministry will care? Coyote is offering troops to them, and since the alliance with the White Shore just fizzled out, they're more than happy to receive any help they can get"

Neville raised his finger, indicating he wanted to talk. When Harry turned to him, Neville said, "So, if Coyote really isn't American Wizards, and then who here in Europe would want an alliance with the Ministry, but go to the cover of hiding themselves? Who"

"That's what I ordered Mr. Cockroach to look up," Seamus said, shuffling his papers again. "He left the Wizengamot yesterday, about 3:00, to follow Pettan Grew around." Noticing Harry's frown, he said, "What is it, Harry"

"Something about that name," Harry said, tapping his chin. "Something very familiar." He waved his hand, as if to clear the air, and said, "Just keep going on. It'll come to me, I'm sure." Muttering almost to himself, Harry said, "Pettan Grew... why is that so familiar"

"Well," Seamus said, looking at his papers, "the last thing is our military strength. We have about ten thousand troops here in Oceania, with about six thousand of them veterans of some sort. In

Lunas, we have another ten thousand with four thousand veterans, mostly ones who stayed after the battle for Beauxbatons. In our other towns we have no veterans but plenty of troops throughout them. We have a total strength of forty-five thousand. We reckon current Ministry strength at forty thousand, White Shore has strength at sixteen thousand, and we have no idea how many troops Voldemort has. Thankfully, we won't be seeing a real concerted effort from either the Ministry or the White Shore very soon. I personally suggest we deal with the Ministry now, while they're still reeling from the Beast-keeper scandal"

"I agree," Harry said, not realizing that the White Shore was about to give them a helping hand in this matter. "Once they're dealt with, we can move on the rest of them. How many Ministry soldiers are in England?"

"About twenty-five thousand, most of them around London"

"Hmm... any small detachments we can strike"

"That's my department," Neville said, cracking his knuckles. "I found out from some very informed sources that three thousand Ministry troops are arriving onto England's shores from Spain on the eighteenth of this month. I don't have total control over this Orb in my head yet," he grinned here, and the Orb flashed as Neville focused his power on it, "but I think I can arrange for a very, very warm and showery welcoming committee"

"I will help you," Padma said, the Orb on her wrist flashing as well. "We must use our powers as much as possible, to avoid losing any Wizard lives"

"Agreed," Neville said. "Too bad there are other types of magic. If Elemental was the only kind, we'd rule the whole damn world, just with these Orbs"

"But as it stands," Ginny said, tapping her finger on the table, "there are many forms of magic, Elemental just one of them. But Padma is right. You two need to abuse your power as much as possible if we're going to win this war"

Luna spoke up "Well I can't go myself some of my students will be more then willing to help destroy some ships. They have been trying to test what pressure can do to people or moving objects."

Samual smiled but shook his head "my men won't be much help for you there."

Blaise spoke "My organizations can't help you in this."

Seamus said "For what you got planned my men would just get in the way. I have no sailers but I will start training them in sea combat soon."

Cho spoke "The Chimera are mainly land based creatures but I have some that will help you, besides it has been a while since I have been in a battle."

Ginny spoke "I have no corpses of any dead sea creatures that my people could reanimate."

Dora spoke finally "My warriors wouldn't be of any help to you and would likely get in the way."

Draco spoke up "If I can find some of my men to do it, they will more then willingly help you out with it. I will also go with my Drake to be air support. But hopefully it will just be more abuse to the ministry"

"Indeed," Neville said. "Speaking of abuse... Seamus, what in the hell do you have around your neck? I think its two eyeballs in a crystal, so please tell me I'm wrong"

"Sorry, Neville," Seamus said, a slight grin touching his lips, "but it really is two eyeballs in a crystal. An old vengeance I had to take out on some previous acquaintances"

And that was the end of the matter, for no one ever asked for more information (though Seamus wore them until the final opponent to Harry's rule in the world was slain), and Ginny never told anyone what she had seen.

Secrets.

"And I thought Ginny was morbid," Neville said, chuckling. His chuckles sounded like water gurgling in a well, a very strange sound to hear out of someone's throat.

"I'm not morbid," Ginny said primly, sticking her nose in the air, "I'm just dead. There's a difference, you know"

"Quite," Neville said. "Being dead gives you a reason to be morbid"

Harry, Samual and Neville chuckled at this, and when they stopped, Padma raised her finger. "I have a question"

"Yes?" Harry said.

"Have you considered the problems of marriage, funerals, law systems, and things of that nature? We are creating a new culture here, and the loose rules we once had will no longer work with the influx of immigrants. We must hurry and do something, or lose control of it forever"

Harry thought for a moment, caught off-guard. That wasn't something he'd ever thought about. What in the bloody hell was he going to do for marriage? And as for death ceremonies, various law systems. Samual watched amused at his master's confusion. He had seen cultures be destroyed because of such things but he didn't know how to run a government so he stayed quiet.

Cho saved him. She raised her finger, immaculate painted nail pointed upwards, and said, "I have an idea"

"What?" Harry asked.

"To marry, the couple must talk to someone you've ordained- let's call them Arbiters, for now- and ask the Arbiter to marry them. If it can be proven that they're loyal, tax-paying subjects- and that brings up another point we'll talk about in a minute- then they get married. Simple as that, it assures that those seeking marriage will be loyal to you, and it doesn't make you a monster whose approval is required for everything. That should solve the problem"

"Interesting," Harry said. "And these Arbiters could also serve as funeral masters, judges, and anything else I may require. But about laws... isn't law something of a moot point? We are monsters,

Padma, the damned. And we are damned because we don't follow laws"

"That's not quite true," Ginny said, "Even demons follow certain laws. We are damned because we don't follow Good, not because we don't follow laws. Evil always loses to Good in the end, and maybe this is why. Because no one understands that law and justice and honor, that those supposedly holy things, are not the sole property of Good. Maybe if we can bring those things here, make black versions of them..." She paused for a moment, thinking. Completely unaware that she was about to say what would become the opening sentences in Harry's new Writ of Law, and by that act become the Lord Arbiter of the Jester's Kingdom, she said, "Law is necessary for life to continue. Regardless of whether that life follows Good or Evil, regardless of whether they walk in light or laugh in dark, law is necessary for life. The same is true of honor. If one is honorable to others, and if those others are honorable in return, then trust will form. And where trust exists, cooperation begins. And that is the cornerstone of this world." She looked up, at Seamus, and said, "You yourself know about honor, Seamus. We all do. By the laws of nature we should be trying to backstab one another. But we aren't, and never will. You're my friends. I would die again for any of you, as you would do for me. Unspoken laws exist between us, and honor binds us to all of them. These are laws we must write for our new world, for the world of night we wish to make" Dora silently nodded to her with Samuel also agreeing.

Aware that something fundamental had just happened, that what had just been said was important, Neville said, "We'd best get cracking then. Laws... what shall they be"

Luna spoke up "They have to protect our citizens because if we don't have them we have no army to speak of."

Blaise spoke "but it would also have to include our slaves"

They began talking excitedly, rapidly, as ideas sprang and blossomed in their minds. And on that day, in that room, they wrote the Writ of Law, establishing the obsidian base from which their dark utopia would grow. It was a dark day for Good on that world.

Laughter from the darkness echoed across the land.

THIS IS THE WRIT OF LAW ESTABLISHING THE LAWS AND PRECEPTS BY WHICH THE JESTER KING, HARRY POTTER, AND ALL WHO SERVE HIM SHALL LIVE BY, AND HONOR.

IT IS KNOWN, THAT IN THIS WORLD, THIS IS TRUTH: LAW IS NECESSARY FOR LIFE TO CONTINUE. REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THAT LIFE FOLLOWS GOOD OR EVIL, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THEY WALK IN LIGHT OR LAUGH IN DARK, LAW IS NECESSARY FOR LIFE. THE SAME IS TRUE OF HONOR. IF ONE IS HONORABLE TO OTHERS, AND IF THOSE OTHERS ARE HONORABLE IN RETURN, THEN TRUST WILL FORM. AND WHERE TRUST EXISTS, COOPERATION BEGINS. AND THAT IS THE CORNERSTONE OF THIS WORLD.

THE LAW, FROM THIS DAY FORTH, IS SET THUS:

THE LAW OF THE JESTER KING IS SUPREME, SURPASSING ALL OTHER LAWS.

THE ARBITERS, AS APPOINTED BY THE JESTER KING, BOTH INTERPRET AND ENFORCE HIS LAWS.

NO PROMISE SHALL EVER BE MADE, EVEN BY THE JESTER KING HIMSELF, THAT WILL HENCEFORTH BE BROKEN.

PROMISES SHALL NOT BE GIVEN FREELY.

HONOR OTHERS AS THEY HONOR YOU. GIVE FREEDOM TO OTHERS AND MOCK THEM NOT.

GIVE AID TO OTHERS OF THE BLACK TIDE, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER YOU KNOW THEM OR NOT. ALL WITHIN THE TIDE MUST STAND TOGETHER, OR DIE APART.

KNOW THAT WE ARE EVIL, AND YET EVEN IN SHADOWS, HONOR LIVES. BIND YOURSELF TO YOUR HONOR.

TAKE NOT THE LIVES OF OTHERS WITHIN THE TIDE. THOSE OUTSIDE IT MATTER NOT, AND YOU MAY SLAY THEM AS YOU WILL; BUT THOSE OF THE TIDE ARE UNTOUCHABLE.

TAKE NOT THE PROPERTY OF OTHERS WITHIN THE TIDE. THOSE OUTSIDE IT MATTER NOT, AND YOU MAY TAKE FROM

THEM WHATEVER YOU WILL THAT MAY BE GATHERED BY YOUR OWN POWER; BUT THE PROPERTY OF THOSE IN THE TIDE IS THEIRS ALONE.

RAPE, PERFORMED ON A FELLOW MEMBER OF THE TIDE, IS FORBIDDEN; THE BODY IS THE PROPERTY OF EACH INDIVIDUAL, GIVEN AND TAKEN BY THEIR WILL ALONE.

TRUST IN EACH OTHER, AND RETURN ALL TRUST GIVEN TO YOU.

THESE LAWS ARE THE BEGINNING. THEY ARE THE FIRST, AND NOT THE LAST. NO LAW IS REPEALED UNTIL SPECIFICALLY STATED BY THE JESTER KING AS BEING SO. LAWS SUBSEQUENTLY ADDED HAVE ALL THE STRENGTH OF OLDER LAWS, AND WILL BE ENFORCED.

THOSE GUILTY OF BETRAYING TRUST IN OTHERS, OF BREAKING PROMISES, OR VIOLATING ANY LAW ABOVE, SHALL BE SENTENCED AS JUDGED BY THE ARBITERS.

HOLD TO THESE LAWS AS YOU HOLD TO LIFE.

BY ORDER OF THE JESTER KING, AND HIS EBONY FLAME,

HARRY POTTER

Current Bounties on the Black Tide

Harry Potter (600 Thousand Galleon Dead from Ministry. 300 thousand Galleon Dead from Voldemort) "The Jester King" or "The Jester of Madness"

Seamus Finnigan (160 Thousand Galleons Alive/Dead, Ministry. 175 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 100-Thousand Dead, Voldemort) "The Black General"

Ginny Weasley (150 Thousand Galleons Dead, Ministry. 175 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 100-Thousand Dead, Voldemort) "Lady of the Dead" or "The Black Lady"

Blaise Zabini (150 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 120-Thousand Dead, Ministry. 195 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 100-Thousand Dead, Voldemort) "The Jester of Pain"

Neville Longbottom (150 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 120-Thousand Dead) "Master of Water"

Padma Parvati (150 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 120-Thousand Dead) "Queen of Earth"

Draco Malfoy (145 Thousand Galleons Alive/Dead, Ministry. 150 Thousand Galleons Alive/100-Thousand Dead, Voldemort.) "King of Beasts"

Luna Lovegood (145 Thousand Galleons Alive/Dead) "Lady of Destruction"

Terry Boot (145 Thousand Galleons Alive/Dead, Ministry. 175 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 100-Thousand Dead, Voldemort) "Lord of Hellfire"

Samual (145 Thousand Galleons Dead) "Lord of Misfits"

Cho Chang (145 Thousand Galleons Alive/Dead) "Lady of Monstrosity"

Fleur Delacour (140 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 120-Thousand Dead) "The Metal Winged Lady"

Wedge (130 Thousand Alive/ 110 Thousand dead) apprenticed under Terry Boot. NKN

Richard Spithe (130 Thousand Alive/ 110 Thousand dead) "Secondary General"

Alex Vicks (130 Thousand Alive/ 110 Thousand dead) "Secondary General"

Current organizations in Black Tide.

Marauders are the basic soldier and terror squad. Their leader is Seamus who only takes orders from Harry or Blaise depending on the situation. His second in command is Vick and Spithe.

Purgers are those with Skull-masters. Their leader is Terry Boot who helps make the Skull-masters and is part of the Enchanters Guild. Terry follows Harry and then Seamus' orders.

Necromancers are those that raised the dead. It was controlled by Ginny. She took orders only from Harry and requests from Seamus.

Elementalist is those that control the elements. Some Purgers are part of the Fire Elementalists but instead of staffs they use their Skull-masters as ways to cast spells. All of the Eclipse is in some part of it. Some Krakens are part of it but not many. Neville is the commander of the Elementalist. He takes orders from Harry and sometimes Seamus. He also learned military strategy, from muggles, so to better command them in battle.

Enchanters are those that make the weapons. Some battle with other groups but most don't. Leader is Cho Chang. They follow Harry's orders.

The Eclipse is the demolition experts. Their leader is Luna who follows Harry's orders then Seamus'. She is also part of the more destructive side of the Enchanters Guild.

The Kraken is the beast tamers organization. Their leader is Draco who follows Harry's orders then Seamus'.

The Sword fish are the assassins. Their leader is Blaise then Daphne. Both of who only take orders from Harry.

The Great White is the interrogation, slavery, and torture organization and is composed mainly of fear-casters. Their leader is Blaise and then Tracey. Both only take orders from Harry.

Chimera is living experiments that are used in battle. Whipstitch is the official leader but is commanded by Cho Chang so she is in command of this unit. She takes orders from Harry and then Seamus.

Barbarians are those that use their rage to power their magic. They use their magic to surpass the human limit and some even get greatly angered and more powerful by pain. They are the opposite of the Monks who seek inner peace. They are lead by, formerly Nymphadora Tonks, now Dora Tonks and Fleur Delacour. They take orders from Harry and Seamus.

Misfits are creatures that have joined Harry, to find haven and take vengeance on the wizarding world that suppressed them. They ranged from werewolves, to vampires, to giants, to veela, to just about every other intelligent creature. Their leader is called Samuel and is a vampire. They take orders from Seamus and Harry.

Current White Shore Organizations

Crabs (paladins) are those that serve the light. They are stubborn and unmoving. Their leader is Ron. He takes orders from Hermione

Animals (beast tamers) they are those that bond with Beasts, and are angry at the Kraken for enslaving the beast of nature. They have bonds with the beast of nature so far that their own bodies change to look like them. They are lead by who is supported by Charlie Weasley who is a new member. He takes orders from Hermione and Ron.

Plants (druids) they are those that control nature itself. They are angry at Harry for destroying the Forbidden forest. They are lead by Patil Parvati. She takes orders from Ron and Hermione.

Sands (warriors) are the basic soldiers. They have the greatest amount among them as well as some of their best soldiers. They are lead by Kaleb Isaacs. He takes orders from Ron and Hermione.

Fire (clerics) they are the healers and help improve battling conditions. They are lead by Hermione who in turn leads everyone in the White Shore.

Calm (monks) are those that have used their magic to give their bodies supernatural limits. They are the more melee fighter and work with the Warriors often. They seek an inner peace. Their leader is George. He takes orders from Hermione and Ron.

Enchanters are those that make the weapons of the White shore. They are powerful and involved with all of the groups. They are lead by Percy Weasley. They take orders from Hermione.

Near Durmstrang, undisclosed location in Northern Russia. July 16th.
2:00 p.m.

There are few sayings (among the million witticisms, anecdotes, and quotes that permeate human history) which sum up true things, which were true when they were spoken and will be true until the end of time. One such saying about sums up the value of courage in one poignant sentence: "Cowards die many times before the final death; the truly brave taste of death but once." A true saying, one proven by the lives and deaths of millions throughout history, some having felt death many times before the finally.

Daedalus Diggle, a coward of a man, was just about to prove the saying all over again. From his position in the relative safety of the convoy's middle, he hoped fervently that if things went wrong, he could remember his way back across these frozen wastes. A blizzard had been blowing for the past hour, and Daedulus had lost track of their current position long ago. The snow wiped out their tracks almost as soon as they were made, and it turned all the world into a vast whiteness that seemed evil to him. Daedulus could barely see the soldiers in front of him, and after fifteen feet, lost his visibility completely. Snow was a complex substance, and it required special training to see through it. Leading this armored division, a group of Snow Hawks- the Ministry Special Forces whose job it was to work in snow and tundra conditions- led the way, their specialized sight piercing the snow. The rest of the group was reduced to blindly playing follow the leader.

This made Daedalus even more nervous than he usually was. A longtime dealer in shady ventures, he was a man whose major plan of action in any engagement was "run like hell". At times, variations like "use someone as a human shield" or "backstab then run" were added, but running was the basic idea. He was a sniveling man, and more and more was coming to regret his initial decision to lead an early-strike force against the White Shore. What had made him come up with the idea in the first place? Maybe it was just his habit of backstabbing his friends and allies alike whenever the opportunity presented itself.

Two days ago, almost at the same time the Writ of Law was being written in Oceania, Daedalus had conceived of what had then

seemed a bold, daring plan. The White Shore had broken off from its alliance with the Ministry. So it was obvious they were going to be no help in future military battles, and once the war was over, they would probably become a government all their own if not stopped. So, why not crush them now? With all the Beast-keeper problems and such, it would be a good morale and public opinion raiser to finish off the White Shore. Using his contacts in the Ministry, he'd whipped up government support for the attack, and been granted nine thousand troops. The White Shore had about sixteen thousand troops, but they were kids. Hell, it wouldn't be that hard to beat them, would it? Give them a spanking and send them home. Simple or so he had thought.

But, for the past few miles, dread had been eating at his heart. Something was wrong... he could feel it. Having lived his life on a razor edge for years, Daedalus had a mongrel dog's acute sense for trouble. It had saved his life more often than not, and he'd learned to trust it.

If he could only slip away and get back to the boats.

Ahead of him, the soldiers stopped. He stopped as well, and over the howling wind he heard some of them murmuring, wondering what the hold up was. Daedalus clutched his knife and drew back. His sense of danger was on red alert.

He had to get out of here.

Front of the convoy. Same time.

Robin Cassan, using the special sight, called winter sight, he'd trained for, viewed the surrounding area.

Except for the two kids before him, he saw no one.

He returned his gaze to them, his eyes glowing white with the power that effectively cut the snow out of his sight. He wondered if it scared these kids in front of him. In his own mind, he thought the kids saw him as a towering figure, a scary giant with glowing eyes. He smiled underneath his fur-padded mask at the image. Oh yeah. This was going to be an easy mission, all right.

The two soldiers before him found him neither mystical nor mighty, just an annoyance.

And a harbinger of worse things.

"This is White Shore territory," one of them said, and despite the scarf wrapped around the bottom of her face and the wind shrieking around them, her voice was loud and clear. "You are trespassing. Leave now"

"Listen," Robin said, feeling magnanimous, "you kids have no idea what you're doing. Now, I'll let you two surrender peacefully and we'll forget this whole thing." Spreading his arms in an attempt to show how kind he was being, he said, "You can all go home"

"Idiot," the soldier said, disgust clear in her voice, "this is home. I want no part of the foul Ministry. Last warning. Leave now or die here"

Rage twisting his mouth into a snarl at the rejection of his kind (or so he thought) offer, he said, "Like you two can stop us. Men! Kill"

A knife, pulled and thrown with an expert's ease, buried itself in his throat. Robin gasped, choking, blood dripping out of the edges separating his esophagus. The soldier who'd thrown the dagger stepped forward.

"Actually, we can," she said calmly. In front of her, the other Snow Hawks gaped dumbly at their fallen commander. "And we shall"

Her voice rose in song, not lifting above the winds but seeming to become part of them. Snow swirled about the two guards, obscuring them even from the sight of the Snow Hawks. When it cleared, they were gone.

And the wolves were upon them.

Ministry's Convoy, near Durmstrang. Same time.

The song the White Shore's guard sung was the cue that set the very dogs of war loose upon the Ministry. It was the death song of the nine thousand, as it were.

Wolves came in like mists, and some were just that, and went back just as fast. To the bewildered, completely off-guard soldiers, they seemed like ghosts, silent as sin and just as deadly as the cardinals. Teeth flashed. Claws rend. Before the men even knew what had happened, the soldiers were dead and the wolves were gone.

Within the first fifteen minutes, all the Snow Hawks were dead.

Within the first half hour, over a thousand had died.

And it was just the beginning.

At the end of the hour over a third of the forces had died.

The Beast-keepers had come to the White Shore expecting nothing. These teenagers who had saved their leader, who had invited one and all to join them in the north, seemed to demand the expectation of nothingness, were such a new thing that to expect anything at all would have been the most horrible of presumptions. The one thing they had expected was a better deal- not an equal deal, no, they'd learned enough to know that they'd never have that- but a better deal, nonetheless.

And they had received so much more.

When the White Shore had broken from the Ministry, the act had surprised them more than anyone else. They'd always expected to become part of the Ministry again, as soon as Harry Potter was killed. And yet the new values that they'd been building into themselves (completely unaware they were doing so), values won from hard days of labor and battle, had cried out against the Ministry, all it's petty little hates and injustices. The honor, nobility, and beauty of life in the harsh north had changed them. They'd determined to make something better of themselves, to do what no one, Wizard or Muggle, had ever done before.

They sought to become a society of the truly equal.

When the Beast-keepers arrived, they were treated as no different from any White Shore member. Not a vestige of residual hatred had greeted them. In matters of housing, food, lodging, everything-equality, blessed equality was what they received. To the Beast-keepers, it was a dream coming true.

And so, when the White Shore asked for help to guard their new home, the Beastkeepers had went above and beyond the call of duty. They took it on themselves to guard Durmstrang, by themselves and their companions. They refused to let ordinary White Shore members help- this was the least they could do, to repay them for their kindness.

And so it was that a pack of hundreds of dire wolves and mist wolves attacked the convoy. In terms of numbers and power, the convoy had a far greater advantage; but that didn't matter. After all, the wolves were just there to harass them.

It was the wastes of snow and ice that were the real killers here.

An hour and a half later, somewhere in the frozen wastes of Northern Russia.

The men staggered on, their energy gone. Most of them were bleeding from one wound or the other. It was so cold that the blood froze on their skin. They no longer noticed. Each man blindly followed the one in front of him, shambling onward like mindless drones. Men fell, struggled to move, shivered, and then died to the cold. Wolves came, as they always did, as they had for the last two hours. Mouths open, eyes gleaming with a feral intelligence and unknown cruelty.

Sergeants too weary to shout commands died under their gleaming teeth, thankful for the deliverance of a quick death. Some men fought them, those with a coward's or strong wills. Many no longer cared. Death, any death, was better than this hellish wandering. With the Snow Hawks gone, the men had no sense of direction, no clear idea of where to go. They were all slowly succumbing to madness and pain; unknowingly feed a certain Jesters even from so far away. In their round-about wandering, fighting the wolves and the cold, they'd traveled north and not south to the ships. They were now on a straight course towards the North Pole.

Daedalus, body torn on the arms and legs where wolves had bit him, gazed at the ruin about him, blood freezing on his clothes or skin. The blizzard had eased up some, perhaps to mock the men by showing what a vast wasteland lay all about them. He saw dead

Ministry soldiers, with their accompanying equipment, everywhere, an overturned wagon there, a dead horse here, so much death.

A wolf howl cut through his thoughts, and he clutched at his bloodied, near frozen, dagger, eyes wide with fear; the wolves, by all the gods, devils, and demons how he hated them. They tormented and harassed, and mocked with those eyes, those terrifying eyes of theirs.

He shivered, his rent clothes losing their magic, the protective warmth beginning to disappear. He felt tears in his eyes. They froze as they left his eyes. No. It could not end like this. Not in some godforsaken land, killed by a bunch of kids and their pet wolves.

"Come out and fight me!" he cried to the winds, shouting and crying at the same time. His eyes were squeezed shut, as all the force of his coward's anguish emitted out from him. "Fight me like a man! Don't just let your wolf pets do the killing for you! Come and fight me"

His false bravado screeched to the winds, he turned around, to continue following the soldier he'd been behind. But when he looked, he saw no one. In fact, the blizzard had grown so bad in the short time he'd had his eyes closed that he could see nothing at all.

From behind him he heard growling. He turned around, knife at the ready, more scared now than he'd ever been in his life. A wolf stepped out of the snow. Soon another came with it, and another. Daedalus glanced around frantically, praying for a way out. There was none.

When the wolves descended on him, he died for the last time, throat ripped out. His body fell to the ground, and his head lolled to the side, dead eyes gazing out on an endless plain of snow. Soon, their view was obscured by the drifts of snow.

White Shore War Room, third floor of the castle of Durmstrang, Same time.

Walter Andrews nodded to the envoy, who snapped off a proud salute before leaving. He turned towards Ron and Hermione, face grim.

"And so it begins," he said.

"Indeed it does," Hermione said, shaking her noble head. "Indeed it does"

Ron, looking every bit the Old Grim his soldiers called him, said, "Nine thousand... they're not beating around the bush"

"What are we going to do?" Hermione said, looking at him. "We can't fight both the Ministry and Harry. What are we going to do? What can we do?"

"All we can do, we fight." Ron said, touching the pommel of Godric Gryffindor's sword. "We fight with all we have."

Durmstrang, undisclosed location in Russia. July 17th. 4:00 p.m.

Hermione looked over the crowd, from where she stood beside Ron on the podium, and a small, unlooked for smile tugged at the corners of her mouth. So, this was the army she would fashion into a force for Good. It was either funny or sad, depending on your viewpoint. The idea that Harry probably found it funny killed her humor, just as he had killed most of her mirth long ago. Beside her, Ron squeezed her hand for comfort, and she willingly took it. She needed all the courage she could muster, for what she must say. He'd asked her if she wanted him to do it, but she'd refused. She had become their leader, the figure that above all represented what they fought for. And so it was fit and right that she would lead them now, that these words should be hers.

She turned to face the crowd, casting the spell that would give her the voice of a giant.

With one last deep breathe to steady herself she began to speak.

"My friends and fellow soldiers," Hermione began, looking over the crowd, trying to see with both her eye and her mind each individual person, each unique soul, "much has happened since the fall of Hogwarts. Much has happened since we fled what was once our home and came here to Durmstrang. We never expected to remain apart from the Ministry. We always thought that we were a symbol, a kind of standing ground, from which all the things our enemy hates and despises would flow from, a place for the best in Wizardkind.

We always thought that the war would end soon, and once it was over and our purpose was served, we would dissolve and go back to our old lives in the Ministry. That is what we always believed.

But, times have changed. We have changed. Our old selves were stripped from us by the cold and the snow of our new home, washed away, and these changeling, amorphous selves, like molten steel, were burned anew in battle. We have been forged a new into something better than we were. And now that we glance back, at what once seemed a symbol of greatness, we see the flaws we ourselves once had. The Ministry is better than Harry Potter and his monstrous Tide. But in a way, they are also worse. Because even Harry realizes that equality has its benefits. Even he sees what good or evil is in it. He has taken it and twisted it, broken and changed a beautiful thing... but he still ends up with something better than what the Ministry has. They dominate and rule and crush all who are weaker than they are... and they damn and mock that which is not. The Beast-keepers that we have taken in know this better than we ourselves know it from long days and nights living under fear of the sword and the whip. This is the Ministry's true self, its inner soul. A soul that fights Harry not out of any sense of the good and pure in this world... but because it fears him, fears him for his strength"

Her gaze swept over them all, watching as each began to realize, in their own way, what she was saying, what it might mean for them all, and she forced herself to continued onward, to not back down from it, "It is the same reason they attacked us yesterday." Gasps and cries from the crowds- with the exception of the Beast-keeper guards, no one had known about the attack from the Ministry. "Nine thousand soldiers landed on our shores yesterday, around 1:00 p.m. The guards asked them to leave, and they refused. The Beast-keeper guards slew them in the frozen wastes, but there will be more, and more, and more." She looked around at the uniformly shocked and mortified room, and continued on. "I will not demand that any of you stay with me. I will do no more than ask, because to do more is to stretch beyond the kindness of Good and enter the cruelties of Evil that we fight so hard against. And above all, we must not become what we fight. For then we will no better but much worse." She looked over them all and raised her gaze upwards, where somewhere above the whirling white sky beyond this room, the stars that mankind have always dreamed upon shone in the endless dark, small lights of hope.

She closed her eyes and spoke, and her next words would always ring out in some small portion of the minds of all those gathered here. "I will not pretend the road will not be hard. I will not tell you that we shall succeed, because we may very well fail here and now. But I can tell you this. If we stand, and if we fight, we shall know something greater, become something greater, and in that black field where all humanity stands singing and shouting in the rain, our singing will be heard above all. And now I ask of you this. Will you stand with me?"

The roar of the crowd below, a strong vote in the affirmative, the war cry of thousands, met her ears and blackened vision. Two tears, of both joy and sorrow, leaked out of her closed eyelids as she gazed blindly upwards, joy of their support and sorrow at those that had died and would die. Despite the fact that her eyes were closed, despite the fact that all she could see was darkness, she imagined the look on Ron's face, Old Grim that he was, gazing over his troops and smiling his bittersweet smile. And maybe, just maybe, in the darkness behind her closed eyelids she saw a light, a bright light, of peace and honor and hope.

Ron turned to face her, and opened his mouth to speak when he caught sight of her in a mirror that lay past her in the great hall. He never told anyone he saw it, and questioned his own recollection of it later until he was certain he'd only imagined it. But sometimes, he wondered.

In a mirror that was angled to reflect whoever was on the podium of the great meeting room, Ron saw Hermione. It was raining in the mirror, a hard driving rain that almost seemed alive, sentient in its want and need to wash all things away mortal. And the rain did not touch her flesh in the mirror and a holy light came from her.

Jester's Keep, Oceania. Same time.

Harry Potter walked the halls of his castle, rubbing his chin as he pondered over the recent events in his kingdom. Ever since announcing the Writ of Law, some things had happened in his kingdom, things both expected and things that caught him completely off-guard. He ran through them in his head, analyzing each one in a mental checklist, after the Writ of Law had first been announced, with Ginny's subsequent appointment as Head Arbiter. He laughed as he remembered that she'd been rather shocked at

receiving the honor, and had responded more like the girl she had been than the Necromancer she now was, hands flapping around as she tried to think of something to say. Several hundred people had come forward to try and become Arbiters. Ginny and Harry had done the anointing, eventually electing three hundred Arbiters for Oceania alone. Using the Portkeys to travel to Lunas, he'd empowered Fleur to elect Arbiters for the mainland Europe portions of the Tide.

Back home, as he would always think of England, he'd empowered Cameron, now mayor of a bustling town, to elect Arbiters for the two other cities in England. And cities is what they were; compared to Muggles, there were few Wizards in the world, and so far smaller numbers sufficed to classify a place as a city. The last Wizard Census, which had tried to identify how many Wizards lived in the world, had declared that there were only six hundred million Wizards in the world, compared to six billion Muggles. The report had been completed two years ago, and had shocking implications to the idea of a war with Muggles. Of the six hundred million Wizards, five million lived in England, with fifteen million in mainland Europe. So few, so very few. But then again no one ever count the magical creatures that now supported his Tide and they made up the number with size and quality especially when they were finished making Goblin technology. They had reversed engineered it so that they could make it. Anyways back to what he was thinking.

Of course, Wizards made up for it with magic and politics. When half the world's leaders were constantly being Memory Charmed, coerced, or were simply Wizards themselves, it was easy to hide. Two-thirds of the British Parliament, both Houses, was Wizards, and the Prime Minister was easily magiced or manipulated whenever necessary. And the Royal Family, and most Noble/Royal families throughout the world, had been made up of Wizards for ages.

Harry ran his finger up and down his slowly lengthening scar as he walked. He had no intention of entering the Muggle world and taking it over by force. Why bother? It was so much easier to rule from behind the scenes. He smiled, wondering what he could do with a million puppet governments under his command. It would be so much fun to be the puppeteer for once.

He'd had some problems putting his laws into effect, though. As a general rule, madmen and lunatics hate to be ordered around, and so most of the last two days had been devoted to killing the

disgruntled souls who violently protested the law. One particular fruitcake had been a serial killer named Willington Normes who, in his best Jack the Ripper impersonation, had slaughtered four people with very sharp knives before the Arbiters had gotten to him. The funerals, something Ginny was cooking up in her office at the moment (which was where Harry was headed, for that matter) were being held today. Other killers and nuts, not wanting to follow the law of even such a monster as Harry and his Ebony Flame, had decided to attack others as well. Many were killed in the streets. Some of the crazies, killers, and nuts were just content with where they were in the Tide and where rather expressive on the fields of war. Everybody in the Tide went armed, so it was a bit harder to freely slaughter them, though people like Willington figured out a few ways to do it.

All in all, two hundred people were killed in the entirety of the Tide, counting the fifty-man resistance movement in mainland Europe that Sec. Gen. Vicks had to put down. More than Harry had hoped for, but less than he'd feared, so it all came out okay.

He stopped as he passed in front of a mirror, looking at himself. He was wearing his favorite black vest and cloak, much like the one he'd worn to the meeting two days ago. Looking himself over as one last check-up, he was about to continue walking down the hall and enter Ginny's new office when he heard something.

"I will not pretend the road will not be hard. I will not tell you that we shall succeed, because we may very well fail here and now. But I can tell you this. If we stand, and if we fight, we shall know something greater, become something greater, and in that black field where all humanity stands singing and shouting in the rain, our singing will be heard above all. And now I ask of you this. Will you stand with me?"

A great roar, of many thousands, followed this statement. A roar for yes, a roar that agreed, in its many-tongued voice, to make a stand, a roar that was, in its own way, very much like singing.

Harry turned his face back towards the mirror, a small smile playing at the corners of his face. Was it beginning? Was it really, truly starting, here and now? Was this prelude over was the true war about to begin?

In the mirror, he saw himself, as we all do when we glance in a mirror, but also he saw more. As a lord of the dark, and Blaise as a mistress of it, as monsters within dreams, Harry and Blaise knew some things instinctively. Saw some things, as well.

And what he saw now was his form, caught in a soaking rain. But it didn't touch his human form; rather, it fell and ran down the outline of a Jester, of a demon with a mask, of a laughing, prancing, clawed form. The rain touched it and became it; became that mocking figure of darkness. Harry's smile became a lunatic grin as he saw what was in the mirror. He saw the only other Jester alive, Blaise, in a very similar position. So much of the world he did not understand. But this, this he understood. He understood it very well.

He looked towards the north-west, grin still on his lips. He raised his hand, and with the echo of the Jester in his voice said, "Well met, Hermione"

His laughter rang throughout the castle and throughout his cities all around Europe. The only one to join his laughter was Blaise, and her voice was just as far reaching as his.

Voldemort's Fortress, undisclosed location in England. Same time.

Voldemort looked up from where he sat, fingers rubbing his temples as they so wanted to do, his breath hanging in his throat like a dead man in a hangman's noose. He was hearing something... something like the patter of rain.

He stood up, and his eyes were a reflection of the emotion within him, wide mirrors into the almost delirious fear in his black soul. He'd heard that sound only twice before. And both times, he'd known that it was for him. But now, for some reason only his dumb senses could fathom, he was afraid. Afraid of what the mirror would tell him. For that's the way it always went, wasn't it? A mirror would tell. Mirrors, those simple pieces of glass that broke the bonds and bounds of this pitiful dream and nightmare we call reality to see beyond.

Voldemort sighed as he walked over to the full-length mirror in his study. He was old, and he knew many things, including what a mirror really was. It reflected the current you, yes, but it was also a

gateway. A gateway... or maybe just a window. Yes, that was more accurate, a window on the Mists and fogs of dreams.

Voldemort stood in the front of the long mirror, his left shoulder turned towards it, his gaze firmly ahead. With another sigh, he turned to look. And he saw the fog of dreams.

A great plain, multitudes upon multitudes, a host beyond thousands, so many that the greatest computers would only snap and break under the pressure of contemplating such a high number. Rain poured, poured throughout eternity, poured not as a gentle spring rain but a harsh, pounding thing, a thing almost living in its relentlessness, stubbornness, and unending amounts, as it tried to pound the multitude into submission. Some brave souls, though few! So very few and he liked that stay that way, turned their vulnerable faces to the sky and sang, sang their song of defiance and hope and honor. And the rain could not turn their faces, for it could not touch them. Others, so many more and yet so much less, writhed and screamed on the ground. And others- fewer than the writhing, almost as few as the brave- stood and smiled directly into the mirror, smiled while rain ran off shadows-no demons behind them. Twice before, Voldemort had seen his face smiling back at him, with that reptile's grin. With a shock, he saw Harry Potter, his greatest nemesis, looking at him. His gaze swept the crowd, and despite the millions there, he saw a girl, a piece of snow white hair drifting before her face, singing and shouting into the rain. And on the ground near her, writhing and screaming in torment, not brave enough to stand and too weak to become, caught in torment for all eternity.

No. He stepped back, closed his eyes, threw his left hand over his face. No. It couldn't be. But in his head, he knew it was true, for he had seen himself. The mirror shattered in front of him.

Wizengamot, Ministry of Magic, England. 8:00 p.m. that day.

Amelia Bones looked over the emissary from their new ally. A fat man, he called himself Pettan Grew, and his fat jowls shook as he talked. His bald head gleamed in the light of the Wizengamot's meeting room.

"Minister," he said, bowing slightly to her, "Coyote sends it's deepest regrets for the loss of your men. We will supply as many more as we

can. It is a sad thing, my lady, and our sorrow is with you." Unknown to her he was sweating for a different reason and that being that he was sure she would catch him.

"Thank you," Amelia said, and the cold in her tightened as it laughed that god-forsaken laugh of inhumanity. Oh Gods, Nine thousand dead. Thankfully, this had been an unofficial, top-secret mission, so Alexander Ceras hadn't gotten wind of the news. He would have turned it into something that she was sure that would not end well for them. Nine thousand dead, she shook her head, almost a quarter of their military capability, gone. They'd underestimated them so much more than they had thought possible.

As Pettan Grew began talking about the various troop movements and deliveries that would be heading to various Ministry encampments soon, he didn't notice the little cockroach that scurried up his back and settled on the collar of his cloak, where there was a little room to breathe. A dangerous job, being a cockroach, but so rewarding all the things to learn and hear and they were lucky very resilient or he would have died already.

A soldier soon burst in, dragging a young girl of sixteen with him. He threw her into the floor of the Wizengamot, and the slightly stunned Amelia recognized the soldier as Edgar Locke, her resident captain of the guard. Pettan Grew, who'd jumped at the intrusion, struggled to control his breathing, while on his neck collar, Cloud Johnson cursed internally. Damn it Armitage she'd just have to have gotten caught! As the only remaining spy in the Wizengamot still free, he huddled closer to Pettan Grew's collar, to hear the proceedings. Edgar began talking in a fast, breathless monotone.

"We caught this spy lurking in the Muggle Studies department, Minister! She was snooping around in an Invisibility Cloak"

On the floor, the blond girl coughed and struggled to stand up. The captain delivered a fierce boot to her head, rendering her almost unconscious. She lay on the floor, her breathing shallow; blood was beginning to cake her hair.

"What? Do you know where she's from? The Shore, or the Tide"

"We're not sure yet," Edgar said, teeth clenched as he remembered how he'd found the spy. She'd tripped him and stepped on him,

making him look like a fool in front of his men, at least until he grabbed her, jerked the cloak off her, and revealed her to the world at large. "We haven't anyway to tell if she is with the Shore or Tide yet though as she has no insignia. We think she's from the Shore, though. They were the last ones here, and the Tide hasn't been here in months. "

Cloud's cockroach antennae wiggled. Ooh, this could be useful. If they thought she was a White Shore spy, then they'd be more willing to fight the Shore than the Tide. This had potential... but he had to play it right. He wished he could send a mental message, but he could do nothing for now.

"Lock her up in the dungeon," Amelia said, mouth twisted in a snarl. " We'll deal with her later"

As Edgar Locke grabbed Armitage and hauled her up, Cloud slipped through the folds of Pettan's cloak to the floor, ran over the guard, and hitched a ride on his leg. Moving up to the guard's left shoulder, he glanced over at where Armitage rode shotgun on the guard's right shoulder, and let out a cockroach sigh.

He hoped like hell he knew what he was doing because if he didn't, he would get them both in trouble, risk his mission, and endanger both theirs lives .

Durmstrang, undisclosed location in Russia. 10:00 p.m. that night.

Ron took off his cloak and took off his sword, leaning it against the wall to wait for a minute while he dressed for sleep. He usually stayed up until long after midnight, for some reason never having nor needing the peace of sleep. There were stretches of days when he never slept at all, insomnia touching him with its wide-awake presence. And then there would be nights he could barely stay awake at all, like tonight. He yawned, shaking his red-haired head, and put on a loose fitting night shirt and pants. Stepping into his silk shoes, he picked up Godric Gryffindor's sword and carried it over to the bed he shared with Hermione. It wouldn't do to be without some sort of weapon in the night. Unlike Hermione, who seemed to be able to cast magic without a focus of any sort, Ron was a Channeler, requiring some sort of focus. He preferred the sword. He'd taken it from Hogwarts' Trophy Room, a seeming eternity ago when he had left Hogwarts with half the DA and Hermione by his side to take up

residence in Durmstrang. He still remembered that wild nighttime run, the fear of being caught strong, the air running high with tense emotions, the thoughts that maybe Viktor Krum had decided to betray them all... and the relief they'd all felt when they had seen the great ship he had brought to whisk them all to safety, a great thing, a mighty ship that had appeared out of the waters of a lake, that long ago night.

Krum's enormous influence in Durmstrang had been the one saving grace he'd had, and for it, Ron was thankful to him. The man had pulled all their asses out of the fire. He had died, in the battle for Beauxbatons, and his loss in the cause of the White Shore was one of the main reasons Durmstrang had become their new home permanently, as a sort of tribute to Krum. To his memory.

Ron shuffled over to the bed. Hermione was in the bathroom, tidying up for bed, and so he was alone in the room. He sighed and put his sword down within easy reach, leaning it against the wall of the room. He lie down, ready to sleep, but felt something stop him. He turned around. And his eyes snapped open wide with surprise.

The words on the sword were moving, shifting, before his eyes, swimming on the sword's hilt like fish through a strange, molten sea. Godric Gryffindor's name swam out of focus, and for a second Ron thought he'd see Harry's swim into place instead. For some reason, fear of the bastard had suddenly stung him deep, deep in the heart. An overwhelming fear, one that brought his courage back. His sleepiness gone, he threw the covers of the bed back and grabbed the sword. Despite his fear, despite that weakness, this was his sword, and he would not be so weak as to be afraid of it, now or ever. And the instant he touched the handle, the fear in him lessened, diminished, disappeared. It had never been there in the first place. The sword had tested him. Through the trappings of its sheath, the sword seemed to glow with a white light, a pure light. The words swam into focus, appearing and solidifying in an instant. The words RON WEASLEY, looking as though they'd been there forever, stood on the sword. And Ron knew what he had to do.

Walking quickly, almost running for fear of the magic running out, he threw open the doors leading onto the snow flecked patio outside their room, on the second floor of Durmstrang. He threw the sheath off Lyonheart (and the name of the sword, never mentioned or

spoken of in Ron's hearing or for many centuries, sprang full-fledged into his mind in that instant, almost like it had been their along) and lifted the sword high. And it gleamed, a white gleam that the storm saw and recognized, that the blizzard aided by lifting and making brighter and greater.

It shone across the distances of time and space. Far away, having felt oddly tired and wanting to go to bed, Harry Potter looked out his window. Shining in the darkness, far away, was a single star. A small, slow smile played on his lips, and he walked to his window, threw it open. Leaned out and lifted his hand, and in the process became the Jester. His right claw, fingers up as if grasping the bottom of a chalice, shone in the darkness with its own black consuming light. Separated by miles in both geography and philosophy, Blaise and Hermione both gaped at the men they loved, stared at each other across the darkness of time and space as twin lights shone, opposites to each other. Soon, both lights diminished, at the same time, at the same rate. When at last Lyonheart's glow died to a small pulse, Ron bent over and picked up its sheath. When it was sheathed, he turned to Hermione, and said, "It's starting. Everything's just been leading up to this"

He turned and walked back into the room, sleep having fled him for the night. "Tell everyone to get ready," he said. "The real war begins now"

Harry, smile turning to lunatic grin, turned to face Blaise. "Yes," he said, drawing it out, hissing through his teeth as he closed his eyes to contemplate what had just occurred. His voice kept going from human to jester until it just had an overlapping echo of both. "This is it. The beginning... of everything I will ever want for. All the pieces are in place. All the veils have been stripped away. Light has revealed its pure nature. Dark has revealed its corruption. This world, and the good and evil in it, has become a force neither good nor evil, just worldly. And Darkness..." He smiled, and even Blaise, who was so like him and so beyond evil but nothing compared to him, felt a measure of fear in that demon's smile. "Darkness has awakened on this world. It is time. The war has begun... finally."

He did not fully understand all he had said, and wondered later where the knowledge had come from. But it mattered not.

It was time.

Bountries on the Black Tide

Harry Potter (600 Thousand Galleon Dead from Ministry. 300 thousand Galleon Dead from Voldemort) "The Jester King" or "The Jester of Madness"

Seamus Finnigan (160 Thousand Galleons Alive/Dead, Ministry. 175 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 100-Thousand Dead, Voldemort) "The Black General"

Ginny Weasley (150 Thousand Galleons Dead, Ministry. 175 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 100-Thousand Dead, Voldemort) "Lady of the Dead" or "The Black Lady"

Blaise Zabini (150 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 120-Thousand Dead, Ministry. 195 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 100-Thousand Dead, Voldemort) "The Jester of Pain"

Neville Longbottom (150 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 120-Thousand Dead) "Master of Water"

Padma Parvati (150 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 120-Thousand Dead) "Queen of Earth"

Draco Malfoy (145 Thousand Galleons Alive/Dead, Ministry. 150 Thousand Galleons Alive/100-Thousand Dead, Voldemort.) "King of Beasts"

Luna Lovegood (145 Thousand Galleons Alive/Dead) "Lady of Destruction"

Terry Boot (145 Thousand Galleons Alive/Dead, Ministry. 175 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 100-Thousand Dead, Voldemort) "Lord of Hellfire"

Samual (145 Thousand Galleons Dead) "Lord of Misfits"

Cho Chang (145 Thousand Galleons Alive/Dead) "Lady of Monstrosity"

Fleur Delacour (140 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 120-Thousand Dead) "The Metal Winged Lady"

Wedge (130 Thousand Alive/ 110 Thousand dead) apprenticed under Terry Boot. NKN

Richard Spithe (130 Thousand Alive/ 110 Thousand dead) "Secondary General"

Alex Vicks (130 Thousand Alive/ 110 Thousand dead) "Secondary General"

Victoria Heavenwalker (140 thousand dead) "the Heart Striker"

Current organizations in Black Tide.

Marauders are the basic soldier and terror squad. Their leader is Seamus who only takes orders from Harry or Blaise depending on the situation. His second in command is Vick and Spithe.

Purgers are those with Skull-masters. Their leader is Terry Boot who helps make the Skull-masters and is part of the Enchanters Guild. Terry follows Harry and then Seamus' orders.

Necromancers are those that raised the dead. It was controlled by Ginny. She took orders only from Harry and requests from Seamus.

Elementalist is those that control the elements. Some Purgers are part of the Fire Elementalists but instead of staffs they use their Skull-masters as ways to cast spells. All of the Eclipse is in some part of it. Some Krakens are part of it but not many. Neville is the commander of the Elementalist. He takes orders from Harry and sometimes Seamus. He also learned military strategy, from muggles, so to better command them in battle.

Enchanters are those that make the weapons. Some battle with other groups but most don't. Leader is Cho Chang. They follow Harry's orders.

The Eclipse is the demolition experts. Their leader is Luna who follows Harry's orders then Seamus'. She is also part of the more destructive side of the Enchanters Guild. practice

The Kraken is the beast tamers organization. Their leader is Draco who follows Harry's orders then Seamus'.

The Sword fish are the assassins. Their leader is Blaise then Daphne. Both of who only take orders from Harry.

The Great White is the interrogation, slavery, and torture organization and is composed mainly of fear-casters. Their leader is Blaise and then Tracey. Both only take orders from Harry.

Chimera is living experiments that are used in battle. Whipstitch is the official leader but is commanded by Cho Chang so she is in command of this unit. She takes orders from Harry and then Seamus.

Barbarians are those that use their rage to power their magic. They use their magic to surpass the human limit and some even get greatly angered and more powerful by pain. They are the opposite of the Monks who seek inner peace. They are lead by, formerly Nymphadora Tonks, now Dora Tonks and Fleur Delacour. They take orders from Harry and Seamus.

Misfits are creatures that have joined Harry, to find haven and take vengeance on the wizarding world that suppressed them. They ranged from werewolves, to vampires, to giants, to veela, to just about every other intelligent creature. Their leader is called Samual and is a vampire. They take orders from Seamus and Harry.

Current White Shore organization

Crabs (paladins) are those that serve the light. They are stubborn and unmoving. Their leader is Ron. He takes orders from Hermione

Animals (beast tamers) they are those that bond with Beasts, and are angry at the Kraken for enslaving the beast of nature. They have bonds with the beast of natures so far that their own bodies change to look like them. They are lead by Walter Andrews who is supported by Charlie Weasley who is a new member. He takes orders from Hermione and Ron.

Plants (druids) they are those that control nature itself. They are angry at Harry for destroying the Forbidden forest. They are lead by Patil Parvati. She takes orders from Ron and Hermione.

Sands (warriors) are the basic soldiers. They have the greatest amount among them as well as some of their best soldiers. They are lead by Kaleb Isaacs. He takes orders from Ron and Hermione.

Fire (clerics) they are the healers and help improve battling conditions. They are lead by Hermione who in turn leads everyone in the White Shore.

Calm (monks) are those that have used their magic to give their bodies supernatural limits. They are the more melee fighter and work with the Warriors often. They seek an inner peace. Their leader is George. He takes orders from Hermione and Ron.

Enchanters are those that make the weapons of the White shore. They are powerful and involved with all of the groups. They are lead by Percy Weasley. They take orders from Hermione.

Chapter 15 of Madness

Any general will tell you that war is luck's plaything, and that more than any other human activity, can be swayed on the slightest whim or desire of Fate. The direction of the entire Civil War was changed when some of Robert E. Lee's notes were accidentally found by Union soldiers. Germany lost a battle against America because a Nazi radio truck got its directions wrong and drove straight into the American lines, allowing them to figure out the movements of the troops in the region. More than anything else, chance plays a crucial factor in war.

As it would in this war and all others like it. Neville told Harry he was going to attack a Ministry ship movement going from Spain to England. Ron and Hermione knew about this movement too. And, in unknowing concert with Neville, they'd planned an attack too. Three armies converged in the first real battle of the war later generations of Wizards would remember as the War of the Long Twilight.

And now, this... this is where the cogs of fate began to turn. Where, in the flow of time, all life stopped and held its breath. Where it was found that even time may have a stop. This is where the dream began to shatter.

Laughter in the darkness of the souls of the damned.

Ministry battleship M.N.F. King's Folly. Same time.

Commodore Wazuki Radius stared into the darkness about him. Above him, like glimmering jewels clasped in the hands of a child, stars shone. He was charting his course by them, using an extremely ancient method of navigating by the North Star. He preferred sailing this way to the more recent development of magical maps. Recent being, of course, a matter of relativity; both had been invented hundreds of years ago even though they weren't as accurate as now. Still, Comm. Wazuki felt more in touch with the true nature of the sea when he sailed by the stars, more at home with the ocean. The soft creak of the magically powered sails, the wind blowing about him gently, even the sound of the water slapping against the ship were all second nature to him.

He gazed about on the waters, from his position on the top deck of the Folly. To his right, three ships (named by the Director of the Navy, in a brief period of drunken humor, the Nina, the Pinta, and the Santa Maria) sailed next to him, containing the three thousand troops they were shipping. Past them, the destroyer, not like muggles destroyers these were made mostly of wood instead of metal since it didn't reacted well to magic, named Sea Lion, commanded by Captain Norris Wind, sailed as an honor guard. To the left of the Folly, two other destroyers, the Fargo (commanded by Capt. Zelbess Marbule) and the Dreamer (piloted by a very feminine man named Capt. Nikki Slash) played escort as well. Wazuki sighed contentedly. He expected a pleasant, quiet voyage. A few storm clouds hung off to the west past the Dreamer, but they were being remarkably amicable for storm clouds and had stayed in the same general area, without moving forward or even threatening the ships with thunder. All was well.

Neville, hiding under the water and watching the boats enter his view as he looked up into the night sky, would have found that very funny.

Kaleb Isaacs, standing aboard the Bleak Anchor, hovering over the water some distance away and waiting to give the order to attack, would have found it sad.

White Shore flagship Bleak Anchor. Several miles from Ministry ships. Same time.

Kaleb watched as, in the distance, the Ministry ships floated into view. Protected by a magical screen of storm cover (produced by the wing beats and presence of the Thunderbird now flying about the ship), they'd waited and waited for a sign, some show of wariness, in the ships. Something to indicate that the Commodore in charge had suspected the storm clouds in the west to hide something more than thunder and lightning. But, in a turn both good and bad, the ships had sailed on innocently unaware of the small army that was now setting out to raid them. Kaleb was glad for military reasons that they did so, anxious for personal reasons- he didn't know if he could do this. White Shore command had explicitly stated that they must capture at least one ship, preferably one of the destroyers or, time and chance permitting, the only battleship. Even one of the passenger ships would be a boon, though. The White Shore was the poorest of the three militaries, both in gold and

resources. So the capture of enemy resources had been put as top priority, next to the elimination of said enemies. And that had resulted in this mission, and Kaleb's selection to head it.

Kaleb was famous amongst the Beast-keepers. Having been the leader of the small group which had liberated Alexander (the other members, notably a young Healer named Alice and a warrior named Jimmy Peakes, who had become celebrities as well), the Beast-keepers held him in a position of awe and reverence. White Shore soldiers, for their part, respected him for the parts he had played both in Alexander's liberation and the battle at the Lake of the Damned. It was the reason Old Grim had chosen him to lead this mission: since both of the groups respected him, he would have little trouble finding volunteers for this mission. Not that Kaleb had been allowed that many men. A single Thunderbird (the precious creatures were too rare to risk more than one at once) and a group of six baghurst riders, plus this great big airship.

The idea was not to attack and obliterate this group, but merely to grab a ship, sink the troop carriers if they could, and get the hell out. Kaleb was more nervous than he'd ever been before. This was his first command job, and already he was performing midnight raids? Why would they place a kid like him in charge of an airship? The captain was here (a former teacher of Durmstrang named Vustag), and he had translated Kaleb's orders into naval talk that was completely incomprehensible to Kaleb. Why did he have to do this? He had no experience in the navy, it wasn't his place. His place was fighting on the front lines and making strategies for their next encounter.

Kaleb calmed his irrational, whining mind and tried to summon up the spirit of the knight within him. Feeling calm and courage flow out of that secret place in him, he settled down as best he could.

"Sir," Capt. Vustag said, gazing at the passing ships. "we should attack now. They are in perfect position for a head-on attack"

Kaleb thought for a moment, then said, "Send the Thunderbird and baghurst riders forward, but circle us around behind them. We'll grab a destroyer with the anchors, sink the passenger ships, and fly off. With the riders distracting them, they won't notice us until we've already attacked them from behind"

"A good move, sir," Capt. Vustag said, impressed despite himself. He had been thinking of such a plan, but though he was a captain, he knew little about naval warfare. Just like the Wizarding community, as a whole, knew little about it, or warfare of any kind. Both were about to undergo some very hard schooling.

"Full speed ahead, men!" Capt. Vustag shouted to his men. As his helmsman attempted to follow them, he said, "Not us. Wheel us about to their sterns. We'll blow them out of the water from behind"

Just as the riders prepared to charge, and the Bleak Anchor wheeled about to attack the enemy from behind, three gouts of water shot up next to the ships. These were soon accompanied by three massive tentacles, each thick as a man. A booming roar shook the sky, as a great sea serpent raised its head from the waters with three smaller ones. Kaleb stood amazed on the deck, and Capt. Vustag cursed.

"What in the name of all the gods is going on here?"

Jimmy who was near by charged out of the room seeing the great sea serpent planning on doing something similar as his ancestor before him, killing the thing to weaken the enemy.

Underneath the King's Folly, one minute before.

Neville floated lazily in the war, easily controlling the sensors aboard the Ministry ships. In the water, in his element (both literally and figuratively), there was very little he could not control. All Ministry ships had special magical sensors that warned of approaching sea beasts and other vessels. Neville had dulled them all into declaring that the skies and seas were clear for miles around. He cleared the skies for Draco and his supporting squad of air fighters along with the Eclipse. Unwittingly, he'd also masked the presence of Kaleb and his convoy, who would have easily been detected through their little mask of storm clouds had Neville not inadvertently helped them. In one of Fate's twists, Kaleb's group was invisible to Neville as well, who had no power over Air and couldn't sense them as they floated in the sky. Which made an interesting picture. Kaleb blind to Neville. Neville blind to Kaleb. Wazuki blind to all.

Three blind mice, all in a row.

Neville, in the few seconds before he let out the call to his monsters to attack, found a moment to be annoyed with Padma. Neville had changed his attack plans after Padma had decided that she could not help him. She had business of her own to tend to, she'd declared. That bloody arrogant bitch. What was her problem? Neville knew of no problems she'd have to take care of. Aragog was the last major force in the Forest besides the Tide, and he'd pulled all his spider children back after the last few battles. The Ministry and White Shore were still too busy dealing with themselves to fight the Tide as of yet, so why was she holding back on him? Neville shrugged his head and decided to deal with it later. As Master of Water, he had infinite patience, although that was only when he could get over momentary anger. He'd noticed something about himself- he never carried grudges long, and anger held over long periods of time did not simmer within him and take over at inopportune times. Rather, it was momentary anger, as brief and violent as the crashing of waves that threatened to overwhelm him. Patience was his, if he only had the self-control to grasp it.

When he'd first heard of Padma's withdrawal, in his room in the Jester's Keep, Neville had been so angry he'd almost killed the messenger. Remembering the bad luck such an act supposedly brought, he'd taken his frustrations out on a nearby punching bag (he had begun practicing martial arts, the smooth counters and rushing punches a perfect fit for his element and body type). He'd busted it to pieces, and afterwards the anger left and the calm came. Nothing he could do about it now, so he simply hoped the attack went well, which it should.

Surprise, surprise, surprise. In a small seminar Seamus had held with the other members of the Ebony Flame (along with a few up-and-coming lieutenants of his and theirs), he'd drilled them all on this one fact: surprise was their greatest ally. Surprise was the one trick that never got old. Surprise was always new, always dumbfounding, and always devastating. Kill your enemy before they even know what hit them. He looked over to Cho who was currently riding something that looked a lot like a hydra excepted for the additions to its body and necks and the endless rows of teeth that were visible whenever one, of the currently five heads, mouths were open.

Being drawn out of his thoughts by the shadow passing over him, Neville looked up and smiled. Time to get moving.

He sent out his psychic commands. The Orb of Water fought him as hard as it could, but in the end he won over it. A Kraken, one of the great monsters of the deep, opened its great luminescent eyes and rose up out of the water below him. His human frame, large as it was, was dwarfed by the pupils in those eyes. It raised three tentacles slowly, almost languidly, about Neville, as if bowing to its master before acting. It then shot them out of the water so fast that they became a blur to Neville's eyes, and created gouts of water when they broke the surface. Not a second later Neville caught movement out of the corner of his eye. Turning his head, he saw a storm cloud become a fast moving, feathered bird. His sight unnaturally enhanced in the water, he noticed a small rider on it, and past it, undeterred by the wind gusts from the magical storm, were the six largest bats he'd ever seen. His eyes widened in complete stupor.

The baghursts possessed huge wingspans, easily over sixteen feet, and the leathern wings ended in claws. The faces were dominated by a long snout, filled with teeth, and piercing, clear brown eyes. Even from this distance, Neville thought that he detected a piercing, searching intelligence in them. Small clawed feet dangled as the baghursts flapped forward to the attack. On their backs, riders rode in full armor, carrying battle spears. The saddles of all the riders were painted white and silver, with the insignia of the White Shore. they also came from a ways away from where Draco was stationed.

In short, it was the last thing he'd ever have expected. "What the hell?" he thought, completely dumbfounded. He watched as the battle began to unfold above him.

English Channel. Same time.

The charge caught everyone- Comm. Wazuki, his ships, and Neville- completely off guard. Capt. Nikki, who had been gazing off into the distance when the attack came, was so startled by the warcry of the birds that he had fallen backwards, onto his ass, and in doing so doomed himself. The Thunderbird struck with a bolt of lightning that rent the sky and struck the ship's mast with a shuddering boom. The magical sigils had protected it, but the lightning had eradicated the protection in the bargain. The second lightning bolt from the shrieking Thunderbird struck the now unguarded deck, and the rigging burst into flames. Ropes snapped

and bodies tumbled, as sailors who had stayed safe during the first attack were blown off their perilous hangings and fell into the sea or onto the deck, where the impact of their bodies were loud, indescribable wet smacks. Nikki thought he would faint from the noise. He almost did so when he heard crunching sounds from down below. Before he could, the broken mast, snapping its timber supports, fell down on top of his cabin. Nikki could do nothing but watch as it came down right on his head and crushed it like a grape. The burning mast caught some of the ship on fire. The flying baghurst riders struck with spears, flying magically straight and true, jabbing down into the milling sailors. One particularly lucky shot pierced a piece of burning cloth and sent it through a window into the map room. The old, dry paper inside was soon ablaze.

Draco, who could see it all from his mount, charged forward with his men and the Chimera unit. The Chimera fliers, monsters that had multiple wings and claws and mouths. He and his men were on birds or flying reptiles. They grabbed their bows and set fire to the arrows before firing flaming arrows at all of their enemies. That included the Thunderbird, the Baghursts, and their riders. They shot their arrows also at any ministry worker they could see. Draco had dragged an Earth elementist along and told him the plan for him to spy on the ministry for them.

Speed being of the essence, the riders, both Tide and Shore, didn't even give the ships they passed a second look before continuing on to the next targets. A sea serpent between the two ships, not knowing whether these creatures were its allies or not, got its answer when a spear flew from a baghurst rider, and an arrow pierced the rider, and pierced its side. Roaring in pain, it reared and snapped at the flying annoyance. The baghurst pulled away just in time to avoid being guillotined by the massive teeth. A blast from the Fargo vaporized part of the serpent's lower body, and so it abandoned its attack on the baghurst. It screamed in pain as salt from the rolling waves grated across its wound.

Capt. Zebess reacted as fast as she could. When she saw the Thunderbird and accompanying baghursts, she had shouted attack orders to the crew and, training kicking in, had assumed battle positions. The great weapons of the Ministry navy were rolled out, and though a Muggle would mistake them for cannons, only the Wizards knew what they truly were. A Wizard had invented cannons, in fact; they had not been designed for use with gunpowder, but

rather, to focus magic spells. He eventually sold the designs to Muggle blacksmiths and made a fortune in Muggle gold. A cannon's cylinder shape makes it great for focusing powerful spells, and even better for aiming them. A Wizard cannon differs from a Muggle one only in this: instead of gunpowder, a specially trained Wizard focuses raw, untapped magic into the barrel. When activated by a single spell word, the cannon in turn activates this stored primal magic and fires it through its barrel. After the initial crafting, it must only be recharged after each shot. One Wizard arms-man had the weapon likened to an oversized metal wand. They also unknowingly did not see the Black Tide flyers at all. Capt. Zebess soon after died by the claws of one of the monstrocities that the enchanters of the black tide made.

The first blasts from the ship were haphazard. Orange-white beams of power blasted from the sides and deck of the ship, aimed at any target that happened to be handy. One of the shots struck the baghurst-antagonized sea serpent; a second pounded into the water right next to it. Several shots went up into the air and passed the White Shore riders, but none were touched by the beams (although the animals, particularly the Thunderbird, who's entire race was naturally violent and angry, were all very much annoyed at getting shot at). One shot struck a Kraken tentacle and knocked it down. It soon rose back up, barely singed.

The sea serpent that the ship had struck was bleeding badly, but in its rage barely felt the wound in its side. It swam up to the Fargo, and the hastily recharging Wizards aboard grew frantic in their efforts to get the cannons ready to fire again. Before they could do so, the sea serpent threw its bulk up against the ship, crashing into magical sigils that protected the wood. They fractured and cracked under the force of the blow, their magic weakening under stress. The crew managed to get a few of the guns recharged and directed all their fire at the serpent. Beams of energy tore into it, tearing apart muscles and tendons, flesh and bone. The sea serpent, body blasted to pieces, fell dead into the water. The sharks, driven past Neville's control by the smell of blood, savaged its corpse. A hydra came from below the ship and its five heads started grabbing the many

The crew had no time to rest before baghurst spears rained down upon it. Sigils cracked and weakened diminished further under a steady rain of blows. To worsen the crew's bad luck, a Kraken

tentacle slapped up against the ship, cracking and tearing the wood as some of the sigils finally gave way. The crew tried to get the cannons reloaded, but the baghursts, noticing the crumbling protection of the crew, aimed expert spears at the cannon workers. Though the first few only bounced off, some began finding new homes in the hearts of Ministry wizards. Bodies hit the floor while men screamed for help.

Comm. Wazuki was far too busy to give anyone aid at the moment. Kraken tentacles were everywhere about him, and a sea serpent was giving his stern workers hell. He was shouting and commanding, an imposing figure, inspiring men to fight. The sea serpent soon died, brain dissolved by cannon fire, but the tentacles proved more stubborn. The few spells thrown at them simply dissolved when they hit, and for some reason his Water Elementalists were unable to calm the creature or divert its attentions. He wondered briefly about that then ordered another round of fire directed at the tentacles. Before that command could be completed, a thunderbolt struck his ship in the side, shattering the sigils there. The Kraken, as if instinctively knowing where a weak spot had suddenly been created, whipped one of its tentacles into the now unprotected hull. Men died as giant splinters of wood were driven with such force into their bodies that they were impaled on them. Cannons, bodies, and armament were flung onto the remaining crew on the other side of the ship. Many were buried under the rubble. Men screamed as the Kraken tentacle actually entered the ship, flinging and crushing all who stood in its way. Of course, the men were just side casualties of the tentacle's real target. One rule of weak sigil magic is that it only affects the surface it's painted on. Of course, that can change if the magics are very strong or rare, but the Ministry rarely spent such money on ships. So if the outside was hard, the inside would be soft.

The tentacle punched through the boards, and alighting on a handy beam, ripped it out. Water began gushing into the ship through the six inch hole. Soon, that hole had widened to over six feet.

The ship was going down.

Ministry of Magic destroyer M.N.F. Sea Lion

Capt. Norris Wind gazed about himself desperately. He was a calm man, cool under fire, but the sudden attack had caught him by surprise. Yelling for his men to prepare arms and unfurl the sails, he

prepared to race the devil himself. Comm. Wazuki had told him that his basic purpose was to guard the transport ships. Altogether, the fat, ungainly things were more important than every ship out here. And they packed few armaments. So, Capt. Wind was going to give them the order to run for it, while he tried to give what cover fire he could for a while, then get the hell out. Which would have worked fine, if not for the giant anchor that plunged into his ship.

The attack was sudden and shocking. Norris watched it happen in slow motion, and in trying to retell it to his superiors after being rescued by one of the transport ships he was supposed to be guarding, he could never quite describe what it looked like. He later figured out what it looked like. He'd seen a hawk, once, dive so hard at a rabbit that it actually seemed to blur, to become little more than a shrieking dart of death. That was what the anchor had resembled. A massive gray hawk diving straight into the ship, bursting through the wood like it wasn't even there, or more correctly, through it. For the anchor caused no damage when it struck the ship.

The crew underneath saw the strangest thing. Through the hull over their heads an anchor dropped, passing ghost-like through the wood, and strike the second deck with a muffled thump. Then, the chain attached pulling it up through the roof (as if the wood didn't exist in its reality) the anchor rose again. It had four points, this anchor, and actually looked like a grappling hook, or maybe a butcher's meat hook. The hooks quickly gripped the wood without destroying it, and the ship began lifting out of the water.

Norris looked up in wonder, and above him saw hundreds of dangling anchors, some as big as the one now dragging his ship into the air, many smaller, all in the same four pointed design. It seemed to be attached to the flat bottom of a great, soaring ship... he tried to count the masts as their white sails billowed out the sides. He counted three before the ship above attacked again. A second anchor slammed down, then a third. And then they rose up.

A man was standing on the third one. No, not a man, a young boy... but his face, and the strange, calm courage in it, made him a man. He was standing on one of the anchor's four points, hanging onto the chain with his right hand as his shoulder-length brown hair blew about in the breeze. In his left hand he held a broadsword. His plate armor seemed to shine in the moonlight, as if reveling in it. He spoke

only four words, but they cut through the crew's panic and made themselves heard:

"Get off this ship"

Norris looked upwards and saw more anchors coming down. And these all had many, many armed men hanging onto them. He looked up and made his decision.

"Abandon ship!" he yelled, running for the banister and leaping off. His crew quickly followed. He also saw one of the anchors fired at the Great Sea Serpent. He saw a young boy not much younger than the one that had told him to get off his ship on it. Nothing on the ship they had been on would do anything to that thing much like the tentacles of the kraken.

Kaleb Isaacs, grinning from ear to ear with the pleasure of a well finished raid, nodded a command for his crew to lift the ship. He didn't know it then, but that thrill he was feeling at completing an act of honest thievery would become a full-fledged love affair with the art of midnight raids, of "procuring", as he put it, funds for the army. He was destined to be a modern day Robin Hood. But that's not the right term. Destiny doesn't exist, as Harry Potter proved; rather, it may be better to say that he chose to become a modern day Robin Hood, a knightly robber a legend of his time.

But he didn't know that then. He simply felt rather good at capturing this ship. The Bleak Anchor was partially formed of dead spirits, though he didn't know much of the details, and by some means of splitting the border eternal, it could cause its chains and anchors to become partially unreal, not there. While in this state of nonexistence, they could go through anything and then solidified.

He watched as Jimmy took on the great sea serpent. He was standing on the great snake's head and had a sword that was cutting into the things flesh. He was dodging to the right and left but never going into the air. Jimmy had told him before running off that no one was to interfere with his fight with the great beast. His ancestor had taken one of these things on with less than what he currently had because the sword he had was made from the teeth of the one his ancestor, Glanmore Peakes, killed. The sword could cut through near anything. Kaleb saw as the leader of the Kraken of the Black tide landed on the Sea serpent.

Draco had landed because he would rather not see the oceans try to destroy these people for killing one of Neville's pets. Draco waved off his overprotective pet and pulled his sword and charged the warrior that was slowly killing the serpent. Draco dodged around his first strike and went to cut through his stomach. He was blocked and his sword was cleanly cut in two. He jumped back to make sure that he didn't share the same fate. He slashed across the kid's face with his claws leaving four bloody claw marks going from the left side of his forehead to the right side of his chin. For that particular strike he in turn had an eye taken from him from a slash of the warrior's sword. Draco lunged back and called his pet to him. Pain and rage flowed through his vein even as he watched the kid kill the monster of the deep from the dark skies.

Kaleb had the anchor that Jimmy used to get to the serpent pulled up with him on it. They patted each other's back and retreated from the battle.

They had no idea that someone watched him from beneath the waves. A very, very angry someone, a person whose infinite patience, if not overwhelmed by a moment's anger, could very well wear down the shores of Time itself.

Squall Cape, Ministry Naval Base, shores of England, July 18th, 3:00 a.m.

Comm. Edgar Figaro, an old sailor whose blond hair lay in an eternal pigtail on the back of his neck, waited anxiously for the ships. Where were they?

"Commodore"

Edgar turned. Behind him, waving his hand wildly in the air, one of his scanner men was waiting anxiously behind his screen. The rolling seat he was sitting in (one of the few inventions of Muggles that had made it big in the Wizarding world) tilted and wobbled violently as the over-enthusiastic private tried to get his commander's attention.

"We got movement"

Commodore Edgar Figaro walked over to the private. They were in the command deck of the M.N.F. Giant's Maw, and outside the portholes of the deck to his right the bleak black ocean rolled on and on. The Ministry Naval Base called Squall Cape lay to his left (North, he reminded himself as he absently glanced at an onboard compass in the control deck to his right), a small and modest little port that was barely equipped to handle the three thousand troops (plus the men on the escort ships) that would be arriving soon. The port had been told to expect them by 2 o' clock, maybe later if complications arrived. When it got to be 2:30, the men were worried; now they were positively scared. Edgar had heard some of the men whispering of the Black Tide, wondering if they were somehow behind this. Edgar had grabbed the crewman who'd been doing the wondering and thrown him into a nearby wall, cussing him out all the while. Fear like that could disrupt the entire damn ship. The unlucky crewman was now resigned to his fate of peeling potatoes, for a month. If he'd back talked, Edgar would have made it two.

As the Commodore reached the scanner, the private said, "Sir, it's showing one ship, moving slowly. Looks hurt, sir. And the size and shape... it has to be a transport, sir." The crewman looked up at Edgar with ever widening eyes. "You don't think it's... ours, do you, sir"

"Of course not," Edgar replied, but felt a twinge of fear in his heart all the same, one ship. "Set a course for it," Edgar said. "We have to investigate this"

"Aye aye, sir," the crewman said, casting a few simple spells to transmit the orders to the crew. Soon enough, the entire ship was turning about and heading south. As they traveled south, towards the mystery that lay south of them, a deathly silence took over the control room. It was quiet, and it stayed that way. No one wanted to be the first to speak and break the spell, break the strange assurance the silence seemed to give that this was just an errant merchant vessel or (please God please) a black marketeer, looking to make a midnight run.

Anything but a lone survivor of the transport.

When the ship was finally in viewing range, the crow's nest lookouts all cried out the same thing.

"It's one of ours! It's one of ours"

Comm. Figaro let out a sigh and put his hand to his forehead. So it was true. "Do you know who?" he asked a crewmate. The crewmate quickly transferred the question via magic to the crow's nest.

"Looks like the Pinta!" their magically amplified voices returned.

As the Giant's Maw pulled up beside the transport, the tattered remnants of men aboard let out a ragged cheer and waved at them from the deck. Comm. Figaro walked out onto his own deck, and ordered a bridge summoned up to connect the two ships. When the magical bridge came into being, he began to step across, but a soaked and bedraggled man cut him off first. He ran up to the commodore and tripped on his own feet. Laying on the ground, he said only this:

"We have quite the story to tell you"

Then Capt. Norris Wind passed out.

Transcript of Message from Commodore Edgar Figaro to Amelia Bones, Minister of Magic The following was recovered from official Wizengamot records, dating back to the time of the War of the Long Twilight. It was encrypted, using codes that have henceforth been broken. Though it has been translated into English, some of the original coding remains, it is believed to be the first official notice the Wizengamot received of the battle in the Channel.

DISPATCH FOUR-FOUR-NINE-THREE CODE LEVEL TEN DATE:
7/18/XX

SENDER: PIGTAIL RECEIVER: BIG SHOW RE: OPERATION
BACKWATER

STATUS: ALL SHIPS SAVE PINTA DESTROYED. SURVIVORS
HALF INSANE. SEEM CONFUSED & FRIGHTENED. MENTION
GREAT "MONSTERS", PROBABLY KRAKEN AND SEA
SERPENTS. MENTION "GHOST VESSEL" THAT FLOATED IN
THE SKY... REPORTS WAITING ON IDENTITY OF MYSTERY
VESSEL, PERHAPS UNKNOWN AIRSHIP, MAYBE BUILT BY B/T?

CAPTAIN OF SEA LION STILL ALIVE, CLAIMS SHIP WAS TAKEN BY THE "GHOST VESSEL" AND DRAGGED OFF BY HUGE CHAINS... PERSONALLY BELIEVE HE'S LOST HIS MIND. HAVE SCHEDULED MEMORY TREATMENTS FOR HIM... TRYING TO FIND OUT WHAT HE REALLY SAW. WILL BE COMPLETED IN A WEEK.

SURVIVORS STATE THAT AFTER THE SUPPOSED "GHOST SHIP" LEFT, THE MONSTERS SEEMED TO DRIFT OFF AND HALT THEIR ATTACKS. NINA WAS TOO DAMAGED TO MAKE IT HOME, BUT PINTA SURVIVED THE TRIP. ALL DESTROYERS P/BATTLESHIP HAD BEEN SUNKEN BEFOREHAND. NO NEW INFORMATION AT THIS TIME. WILL ALERT YOU AS SOON AS ANYTHING TURNS UP.

OVER AND OUT.

Wizard Town of Hope Bright, countryside of England, July 19th.
Noon.

Sirius Black looked up into the bright sunlit sky. Clouds drifted lazily, as they always had, ignoring the lives and deaths and fates of all those who lived below them, drifted by ignorant of the torment wracking one man's heart and the few people that followed him silently.

Sirius lowered his gaze and walked on. Hope Bright was a fairly big Wizarding town, not a city like Diagon Alley or Hogsmeade, but pretty big regardless. It was also a town that had a long history of Enchanters and Illusionists. Henceforth, when Sirius walked about in a magically created face that disguised his true identity, the people thought nothing of it and went on their way. Half the people here had enchanted faces, to enhance their looks and beauty. It was a popular pastime here. A Mudblood Wizard had once jokingly suggested that Hope Bright was the Wizarding equivalent of a town of plastic surgeons. He was pretty close, too.

As Sirius walked down the streets, heading to a rather respectable inn he'd inquired at, his mind twisted and turned. He was like a raging, boiling cauldron of hot water, just waiting for enough heat to push it over the edge and cascade down the sides of its container, drowning everything in its path. Sirius thought about that, and

chuckled. Great, now he was comparing himself to cookware. Next he really would go insane.

He shook his head sadly as he walked down the street, his brief levity completely forgotten, and as people passed him they seemed to cringe and dodge almost involuntarily. None of them would say just why they avoided this man; it may just have been something about his aura that spoke of great pain and unspeakable loss.

Those who have suffered a great life change usually find that the mass of humanity is no more than ants to them. To those who have seen both the higher things and the lower things, the acts and concerns of mere humanity seem unimportant and weak, as they were to Sirius, who had suffered so in Azkaban. He'd tried to explain to Harry, but there was so much you couldn't say... the long nights when he considered ripping his own paw off so that the gushing bloodflow would kill him and end his torment... the screaming of so many prisoners as Dementor after Dementor gave them special treats, little kisses that left the receiver dead to all things... the sheer unspeakable aura of the place. It was not a place you could describe.

But there was also that one event, that beautiful and single event that had happened five years after he'd arrived, an event so great and grand that the memory of it was enough to keep him fighting for years to come. To eventually free himself. More than his dog form, more than the fact he was innocent, the great happenings of a cold day in December in his fifth year at Azkaban had helped him carry on.

But that day was not for remembrance now. Later, yes... but not right now. He had to think.

Why? Why had Harry turned dark? What had happened? Why?

Sirius thought about everything he knew about Harry (which, admittedly, wasn't much). He had struck Sirius as a somewhat confused, lost boy, who was naturally cheery and chummy but was also just as naturally a pessimist and cynical about the world. When they'd caught Pettigrew as Ron's rat Scabbers (and even now, Sirius felt the old rage for Pettigrew boil up in him, like that oft-spoken cauldron, bubbling over its constraints to consume everything), it had been Harry who was least surprised of the three children. Ron had been dumbfounded, Hermione even more so (alongside her

great brainpower, she had unfortunately inherited an innate tendency towards arrogance and belief in her own superiority, something Sirius had picked up even though it was their first real meeting), and Harry had been surprised too... but somewhere, deep in his heart, the confusion had ended near immediately and the thinking began.

Sirius wondered why Harry had saved Pettigrew. Misguided honor? Some skewed sense of right and wrong? Which in reality dictated Pettigrew's sudden and imminent death? Or maybe something deeper as Sirius had seen in his mother rarely but had seen? Something calculating, calm and powerful and darker than anything this world had seen in a long time? Something that may have wanted Pettigrew to suffer far more than he could have if Sirius and Remus had simply killed him, maybe torturing him himself? What was it that had made him suffer Pettigrew to live?

In the other conversations, carried out by letter and fire, that the two had held, Sirius had sensed something in Harry: a half-hidden feeling, like the undertow of a river that seemed to be the weakest part of the rushing water, an undertow that you only realized was the strongest part when it pulled you under and wouldn't let you back up. This feeling was rage. Rage against the world. Part of it was hate and Sirius didn't misjudge him for it. Who couldn't hate, brought up by the Dursleys, parents murdered, regarded as freak by Muggles and hero by Wizards, who could not hate? But part of it was a deep, abiding sadness (sadness for loss, both his own and all the world's), but the main thing was rage. Rage against everything. Harry had become the exact opposite of the pitiful, whining crying geeks that filled the world, that moaned and cried about the state of things but never did anything about it- he had become a rager, a hater, someone who would seek a high position and from there deal out retribution to all the world. Of course, at the time of the talks, Sirius hadn't sensed all this, but it came out easily enough when he thought about it now (hindsight really did have a clarity so perfect it was agonizing). Maybe that was the source of Harry's madness. Of the Jester that he had become.

Sirius shook his head. Regardless, he had a train to catch. He was heading north, to Durmstrang, on a smuggler's boat, and to get to the isolated beach it was launching from he required the aid of a train. A Muggle train, but that was okay. Better, maybe.

After all, if he took the Knight Bus, he'd probably have to kill most of the passengers and take the driver hostage just to get where he wanted to go. And then he'd have to kill anyone else left so he could protect the identity of his smuggler. And that would mean so many bodies to bury.

Smirking at his own traitorously sarcastic thoughts, Sirius walked on through the town, heading to London for his train. Where, in a few days time, a great tragedy would occur...

Emissary Tower, formerly Headmaster's Tower of Beauxbatons School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, somewhere in France, Same time.

Fleur looked out the window, human in form now, wearing a gray outfit she'd chosen just for these occasions. He was coming. The person she'd thought of as a little boy years ago (and his actions, after all, had seemed to be a boy's, including the staring and ogling she had grown used to and learned to hate) and now thought of as her boss. Harry Potter. The Jester King.

The man that she was so afraid of. That she so hated, for making her feel so confused. That she so desperately wanted to believe.

The door behind her creaked open slightly, and then, as if realizing that opening a room unannounced was a drastic breach in conduct, the guest closed it slightly and knocked lightly, politely. Fleur lowered her head.

"Come in," she said, her thoughts still dire. The visitor walked in, and as always, the force of his personality struck her. Even when you weren't looking at him, Harry had a way about him of commanding attention. She turned around.

He was dressed in rather simple clothing; in fact, all she could see of what he was wearing was an enormous black cape that covered his shoulders and body. None of him except his face was clearly visible, and that was partially hid by a sweeping head of hair. It hadn't been cut in a while, so it had grown quite long. The overall effect, however, wasn't of shagginess or sloppiness; rather, it was one of mystery, as the long bangs served to partially cast his face into shadow. The scar that now reached the tip of his nose winked out of that shadow

like a red eye gleamed at night. Harry's head was held up straight, but somehow seemed to be lowered in thought, as hers had been a few seconds ago.

"Fleur," he said, nodding to her. The scar winked at her again. She nodded back.

"Sir," she responded.

He walked over to the window beside her, and looked down over the fields of Lunas. Fleur turned around and joined him. From this high up, one could almost see for forever... or so it seemed. Below them, audible even from this height, the cursing and laughing of giants at play floated up, distance transforming it from a noise like diesel trucks smashing into each other and into something more like the sound of genial conversation. The giants were having the times of their lives, regarding the huge grasslands surrounding

Beauxbatons as playing grounds for titanic games of wrestling and American football. A young Marauder named Pierre (a former student of Beauxbatons) had been to America once, and instantly fallen in love with the American version of football. When the Tide had come to Beauxbatons, he'd taught the game to his newfound army friends, and soon entire groups of Marauders were playing football with each other. When the Misfits had arrived, the giants had watched them play with particular eagerness, and when they'd learned the rules, they fell in love with the game. Giants and football went together like meat and potatoes, and now an enormous playing field had been marked off on the grasslands with magical lines that never faded or disappeared, a good thing too, since the giants tended to be very rough in their games of football. The thudding sound of great bodies hitting the ground had become an everyday thing to the people of Lunas. Just as the sound of the machinery at the Boneyard, the whirring and scraping noises of earthwork, had become just another background noise to them. Like the people living near Niagara Falls, the people of Lunas were actually rather uncomfortable without a great deal of noise going on in the world around them. In later years, Lunas would be jokingly called the "Rumbling City" for the constant noise that flowed out of it.

Oddly enough, the problem of giant aggression had been taken care of by Pierre and helped by Terry when he introduced football- if two giants disagreed the law of Lunas stated that they could take it to

the field. The two giants would round up eleven friends each, and then the game would start. The victor would be declared the winner of the argument. There had been some grumblings at first, but because football was so much like fighting that the end result seemed to be the same (minus a bunch of dead giant bodies lying around, of course), the giants readily agreed to the new rules. Unfortunately, Fleur was worried that she'd have to start building a new stadium, just to keep up with all the arguments the giants were having. Everybody had a score to settle, it seemed. The football field was booked for a week. At the moment, a game was about to end, and it looked like the team decked out in blue was going to lose to a group with green ribbons. Since wearing actual team color shirts would have been impractical (not to mention expensive), Fleur had designed long flowing ribbons that were easy to replace and still identified the team. Those giants who had formed "professional" teams proudly wore their ribbons at all times, the great strands flying out ludicrously from their hair. Pierre, who had been put in charge of football by default, wore a single black ribbon in his hair, and could usually be seen flying about on a broomstick over the football games. He didn't ref the games himself, though; much safer to leave that to someone else. A ref might get accidentally knocked off their broomstick by an errant hand or fist, and Pierre himself had almost gotten killed by a (relatively) small giant who'd flown out of the game after a particularly hard sack and nearly landed atop him. Ever since then, Pierre tried to fly as far above them as he possibly could. He watched the games with keen interest, devising new rules and strategies particularly designed to make the game even more enticing to giants. He was a barely visible spot above the field to Fleur's vision.

"It's strangely beautiful, isn't it?" Harry said, his voice low, almost a whisper. His face, lowered as it was, seemed to be covered by his hanging hair, and it struck Fleur as sad and solemn, somehow. She looked at him, dark face in profile.

"What?" she said, not confused by what he had said, but the way he looked.

"This." He raised his left hand out of the great cloak on him, revealing an arm dressed in a black suit sleeve. He moved his hand slowly in the air, indicating all of Lunas with one expansive wave, then just as slowly retreated his hand back into the cape. His cape's hem shushed against the floor as it parted briefly, then resettled.

"It is a pretty view," Fleur said, not understanding what Harry was getting at.

"Not just that," Harry said, and for the first time Fleur saw that Harry was sad. The laughing demon, the Jester King, was now solemn and silent, a figure of thoughtful, quiet repose. It struck Fleur as one of the oddest things she'd ever seen in her life, but the new mood did not seem as if it was foreign to Harry- rather, it seemed just as natural as his insane laughter to him. Maybe more so.

"What do you mean?" she asked him, head cocking to the side as she tried to study him, to puzzle him out.

"It's... all this," he said, shaking his head slightly, a bare twitch from left to right and back again. "Look out there. Giants playing out in the open. In any other place on this earth, they would be killed... tortured... murdered..." Harry shook his head again and sighed. "And why? For what reason? Just for existing? Just for being?" He sighed again. "For such a pathetic and foolish reason"

"Harry? Sir?" Fleur said.

Harry turned to face her. His bangs hid his face from her, seeming to wrap it in darkness, but his voice came out to her, from that shadowy place beneath his hair, and in that voice she heard nothing but the unmistakable ring of truth. She also saw his soul piercing green eyes that seemed to judge what they saw.

"You don't trust me. I know that. I understand it and more so... respect it, that you would not be stupid enough to give your trust blindly. I'm not here to ease all your fears about me. I couldn't do that if given all the time in the world, and my words alone would never alleviate your mistrust in it's entirety- might, indeed, deepen it, make you fear me more, fear I was planning some treachery. But that's alright. I just want to make you understand this one thing"

"What?" Fleur said.

"I want to make you understand," Harry said, "that I want to make this the world of the Forbidden. We've all been downtrodden our whole lives. Each and every one of us, in their own way, has suffered or been exiled. We're the underdogs, Fleur. Beaten on,

kicked around, ordered about, used and when there is nothing left of us, after they've taken and taken and taken, we're thrown away like old bottles. We're forbidden, forbidden from life, forbidden from happiness, forbidden from freedom and like the forbidden forest we will fall if we don't stand against those that dare to try to take us down."

He turned and looked out the window, and Fleur continued staring at him, hearing all the essence of her life and her mission at Lunas summed up in a few simple words, in phrases that echoed in her heart and mind.

"I want to make us the monsters they think we are," Harry said fiercely, almost cursing the words into the air. "I want to give the Forbidden its time in the sun. We have suffered too much, too long. Denied everything because of birth or any number of other things..." Here his voice broke for a second, and Fleur saw inside him, saw to that part of him that he showed no one willingly, the part that always screamed at the injustice of the world, "And now I want to change that. I want to make the hunted the hunter, the master the slave. I want to break this world and make it bleed beneath my feet. And I want to help every one of us who have cried out in the night and heard no one answer but the wind. I want us to touch the sky and rend it to pieces"

He turned to Fleur and said one more thing, a saying which stuck in her head all her life from that point on:

"Every dog has his day. Now it's our turn and we will make the best of it."

Bountries on the Black Tide

Harry Potter (600 Thousand Galleon Dead from Ministry. 300 thousand Galleon Dead from Voldemort) "The Jester King" or "The Jester of Madness"

Seamus Finnigan (200 Thousand Galleons Alive/Dead, Ministry. 175 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 100-Thousand Dead, Voldemort) "The Black General"

Neville Longbottom (200 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 120-Thousand Dead) "Master of Water"

Ginny Weasley (150 Thousand Galleons Dead, Ministry. 175 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 100-Thousand Dead, Voldemort) "Lady of the Dead" or "The Black Lady"

Blaise Zabini (150 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 120-Thousand Dead, Ministry. 195 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 100-Thousand Dead, Voldemort) "The Jester of Pain"

Draco Malfoy (175 Thousand Galleons Alive/Dead, Ministry. 150 Thousand Galleons Alive/100-Thousand Dead, Voldemort.) "King of Beasts"

Cho Chang (160 Thousand Galleons Alive/Dead) "Lady of Monstrosity"

Padma Parvati (150 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 120-Thousand Dead) "Queen of Earth"

Luna Lovegood (145 Thousand Galleons Alive/Dead) "Lady of Destruction"

Terry Boot (145 Thousand Galleons Alive/Dead, Ministry. 175 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 100-Thousand Dead, Voldemort) "Lord of Hellfire"

Samual (145 Thousand Galleons Dead) "Lord of Misfits"

Fleur Delacour (140 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 120-Thousand Dead) "The Metal Winged Lady"

Victoria Heavenwalker (140 Thousand Galleons Dead) "the Heart Striker"

Wedge (130 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 110 Thousand Dead) apprenticed under Terry Boot. NKN

Richard Spithe (130 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 110 Thousand Dead) "Secondary General"

Alex Vicks (130 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 110 Thousand Dead)
"Secondary General"

Current bounties on the White Shore

Hermione Granger (200 Thousand Galleons Dead) "the Snow Lady"

Ron Weasley (175 Thousand Galleons Dead) "Old Grim"

Walter Andrews (160 Thousand Galleons Dead) "Beast master"

Kaleb Isaacs (150 Thousand Alive/Dead) "Robin Hood"

Jimmy Peakes (150 Thousand Alive/Dead) "Serpent Slayer"

Current organizations in Black Tide.

Marauders are the basic soldier and terror squad. Their leader is Seamus who only takes orders from Harry or Blaise depending on the situation. His second in command is Vick and Spithe.

Purgers are those with Skull-masters. Their leader is Terry Boot who helps make the Skull-masters and is part of the Enchanters Guild. Terry follows Harry and then Seamus' orders.

Necromancers are those that raised the dead. It was controlled by Ginny. She took orders only from Harry and requests from Seamus.

Elementalist is those that control the elements. Some Purgers are part of the Fire Elementalists but instead of staffs they use their Skull-masters as ways to cast spells. All of the Eclipse is in some part of it. Some Krakens are part of it but not many. Neville is the commander of the Elementalist. He takes orders from Harry and sometimes Seamus. He also learned military strategy, from muggles, so to better command them in battle.

Enchanters are those that make the weapons. Some battle with other groups but most don't. Leader is Cho Chang. They follow Harry's orders.

The Eclipse is the demolition experts. Their leader is Luna who follows Harry's orders then Seamus'. She is also part of the more destructive side of the Enchanters Guild. practice

The Kraken is the beast tamers organization. Their leader is Draco who follows Harry's orders then Seamus'.

The Sword fish are the assassins. Their leader is Blaise then Daphne. Both of who only take orders from Harry.

The Great White is the interrogation, slavery, and torture organization and is composed mainly of fear-casters. Their leader is Blaise and then Tracey. Both only take orders from Harry.

Chimera is living experiments that are used in battle. Whipstitch is the official leader but is commanded by Cho Chang so she is in command of this unit. She takes orders from Harry and then Seamus.

Barbarians are those that use their rage to power their magic. They use their magic to surpass the human limit and some even get greatly angered and more powerful by pain. They are the opposite of the Monks who seek inner peace. They are lead by, formerly Nymphadora Tonks, now Dora Tonks and Fleur Delacour. They take orders from Harry and Seamus.

Misfits are creatures that have joined Harry, to find haven and take vengeance on the wizarding world that suppressed them. They ranged from werewolves, to vampires, to giants, to veela, to just about every other intelligent creature. Their leader is called Samual and is a vampire. They take orders from Seamus and Harry.

Current White Shore organization

Crabs (paladins) are those that serve the light. They are stubborn and unmoving. Their leader is Ron. He takes orders from Hermione

Animals (beast tamers) they are those that bond with Beasts, and are angry at the Kraken for enslaving the beast of nature. They have bonds with the beast of natures so far that their own bodies change to look like them. They are lead by Walter Andrews who is supported by Charlie Weasley who is a new member. He takes orders from Hermione and Ron.

Plants (druids) they are those that control nature itself. They are angry at Harry for destroying the Forbidden forest. They are lead by Patil Parvati. She takes orders from Ron and Hermione.

Sands (warriors) are the basic soldiers. They have the greatest amount among them as well as some of their best soldiers. They are lead by Kaleb Isaacs. He takes orders from Ron and Hermione.

Fire (clerics) they are the healers and help improve battling conditions. They are lead by Hermione who in turn leads everyone in the White Shore.

Calm (monks) are those that have used their magic to give their bodies supernatural limits. They are the more melee fighter and work with the Warriors often. They seek an inner peace. Their leader is George. He takes orders from Hermione and Ron.

Enchanters are those that make the weapons of the White shore. They are powerful and involved with all of the groups. They are lead by Percy Weasley. They take orders from Hermione.

Trees (rangers) they are those that are like the druids in that they live in nature. They are some of the more survivalist of the White Shore. They are lead by Jimmy Peakes. He is descended from Glanmore Peakes who was slayer a powerful Great sea serpent as he himself has. He takes orders from Hermione and Ron

He-Who-Has-No-Name if you complain, or comment, please do so with your actual account because it is cowardly to not do so and I like to actually talk in private with people instead of having to make comments like this. Also you really don't know English if you think I have lousy spelling, though I admit to the bit about lousy grammar. Also if you actually read my story you would know that first of all I ask him if I could use it and I waited months to get a reply, which I didn't get, so I added my own parts to the story well keeping the plotline intact and took over the story. Also because I made my own parts I can officially say that this is my fic so it is not fic-theft. Also I changed the song a bit but like the saying says "If a good thing works, Don't fix it"

Partially completed Jester's Keep (about three/fifth of the way done, at least the above ground parts), meeting room of Ebony Flame. July 20th, Noon.

Seamus Finnegan looked down at the maps before him, trying to figure out what to do next. The attack in the Channel had went extremely well, with just one ship making it out, and the sighting of a new White Shore weapon was a good thing too; now that they knew about it, they could counter it, although the lose of Draco's eye was unexpected and a bit harmful to them. As Seamus looked at the maps on the table below him, he wondered what to do next. There really weren't any small units the Tide could harass; the Ministry had learned its lesson and had bunched itself into large, tightly knit groups in easily defensible areas. Of course, the Tide could now launch strikes against almost any Ministry-controlled Wizarding city and demolish it in seconds, since there weren't any guards around most of them- but that would have been counterproductive and it would just put civilians in battles. Harry wanted to rule everything, not burn it all to the ground. Flame and ash sounded all well and good when you were thinking about destruction, but when you wanted to rule not so much.

Seamus stopped dead, as he thought about fire. He blinked twice, as if he was a computer rechecking its banks of memory, and then looked down at the maps. He had something here. In the middle of the table, a map of England was displayed. And displayed therein was London. He had to find Harry and Terry.

Seamus ran out of the room to find Harry and Terry.

London, England. July 23rd. Dawn.

As the sun began to rise on the far coasts, the people of London were awoken by singing. Most of the people did not catch the words, sleepy as they were; but a few did, and though they did not understand what the words meant, they were scared.

Somewhere deep inside, they were scared.

The 23rd of that year was forever after regarded as one of the bleakest, blackest days in all of England's history. International aid arrived for weeks afterward, trying to restore the historic city to its former glory.

But what has been touched by fire is changed forever.

Outside London, England. Same time.

Almost every great city has been burned at some time or another. Chicago burned, New York burned, and a million other big cities have at some point been burned by flame. London was no exception; the Great Fire of London created tales that persevered to the present time. With the technology they possessed, the Muggle firefighters thought they could handle any flame, and prevent another Great Fire from destroying the homes and lives of British citizens.

They were wrong. So very wrong. So deadly wrong, and that is all the Black Tide need.

An army of eight thousand was walking towards London on the highways of the Muggle road system. Ordinarily, eight thousand troops would get mopped up by the guard units around London; but this was no ordinary group.

They were Wizards.

At the head of the column was a group of Marauders, but behind them, the real warriors waited; the Purgers, Skull-masters at the ready, some even having Hell-Burners as Terry had taken to calling his Hellfire Skull-Master, were marching, and as they marched they sang.

The Lyrics of the Purger's Marching Song, "A Fiery Breeze"

Every army has songs they sing while they march, songs generally called "cadences". Cadences run the gauntlet from hilariously funny to morbid and sad, but every army has them. How the Tide discovered their cadences, however, is something of a story in itself.

The legend goes that the Black Tide had no cadences until one day when Seamus was marching his troops in a practice formation. As he marched them, he found himself humming a Muggle tune he'd heard once, a rock tune that fit with their steps. As he hummed the tune, he found himself unconsciously singing it, and he noticed that it helped his steps stay in unison with those of his soldiers. Realizing that he'd stumbled onto something, he told his troops to sing with him, and soon afterwards the Tide discovered cadences. Many people crafted songs and sent them to Seamus, hoping to write "the song" that would become an official Tide cadence, but only one stuck out in his mind. It was a song an entire corps of Purgers had written together, and represented the essential heart and soul of the Tide. Seamus soon had Ginny (who was running most of the laws in the Tide by that time) write and pass a bill making it the official marching tune of the Tide. Some of the other units made their own as well but most stayed with the Purgers song.

Traditionally, units of Purgers always sing first, in recognition of having written the song.

The tune goes like this:

"A Fiery Flaming Breeze.

We all laugh,

As does our King

And as well we laugh

We shall sing,

Of the burning roads,

On the burning lands,

and the flames that roar,
and thunder,
beneath our hands.
For you see,
the Tide has come,
and we won't leave,
'til the burning's done,
for though we are,
a Tide of Black,
Fire is a friend,
We do not lack,
So we shall leave lake of ash,
And you can hide,
behind steel leaves,
you'll still get caught,
in our fiery breeze.
You drove us out,
and now we're back,
and we'll make this world,
a place of sins,
because you thought,
to end us all,

we'll set you up,
for a great big fall.
And in you'll go,
to the darkest maws,
And see inside,
the horrors we saw,
So now hear us,
those who threw us out,
and know right now,
no matter how you shout,
or that you can hide,
in your mighty trees,
You'll still get caught,
in our fiery breeze.
In a fiery breeze.
In a fiery breeze."

Outskirts of London, England. Dawn of the 23rd.

Seamus rode before his men, his spider mount covering the ground swiftly with its long, hair-covered legs. As he rode, he sang with his men, reveling in the song and marching to its beat. He'd debated getting drummers in the army, but decided that it would be too much of a strain on their forces to do so. Besides, the song didn't seem to need anything other than the singing of the damned and forbidden to do it justice. The song was a heartfelt cry of the Tide, and it rolled on and on like water over fallen shores. As the army marched, cars

coming out of London braked to a halt, and the inhabitants stared at the approaching army with mingled confusion and shock. Muggles, after all, were not used to seeing armies of spider-riding knights walking on their roads.

As the car drivers realized that what was happening was not a hallucination (they discovered this at about the point the army began crushing the cars in it's way and killing the inhabitants), they began to scream and panic and honk their horns in madness and try to get away- but none of them did. One truck driver, who was partially drunk at the time, attempted to flatten the approaching army with his semi, Seamus vaporized him and most of his truck with his Bayonet. The newly freed wheels spun a few times and rolled off to the sides.

As the army began to reach the outlying suburbs of London, the marauders moved back and the Purgers forward as they opened up with their Skull-masters. Streams of fire arced through the sky over the ground and seemed to stroke the houses nearby, as if they were friendly fingers caressing a loved one. The houses soon burst into flames.

The army continued rolling on, heading to the very heart of London as walking walls of fire.

BBC Helicopter, skies over London, same time.

Dan McDale looked out over the boring sky of London. Every day it was the same damn thing. When he'd first gotten this job a few weeks ago he'd thought it would be great- and who wouldn't want to fly around in a helicopter all day, bitching about the weather and getting paid for it- but now he found that it was more boring than his desk job had been. He almost wished he was back there now; at his old job, he could at least try and see if he could look up the skirt of the new secretary and get rewarded with a glimpse of her thong every now and then. As his job was now, the only person he could stare at was his pilot, and if that man didn't have a face only a mother could love, then Dan didn't know who did.

"Ready, Mr. McDale?" the old pilot said. Dan nodded, while privately fuming; the old bastard always said "Mr.", like he couldn't let protocol drop, even for a moment. Ooh, it made him so mad he could barely stand it. He really hated the formality.

"Okay, we're rolling in five... four... three..." the old pilot held up two fingers, then one, and finally closed his fist, indicating the camera was on. Dale waited a second to be sure, then began his daily weather report.

"This is Dan McDale, with the BBC weather report. In our news today... holy shit!" Dan screamed.

The pilot looked back at him, wondering what in the world had caused the scream from him. As the pilot looked back, he saw the pillar of flame that had caught Dan's attention. It caught his too. "This is Dan McDale, BBC news! There's an enormous cloud of fire that has engulfed a portion of the city! We're going there now-"

As the helicopter's engine roared and it began zooming off to the towering inferno on the outskirts of the city, Dan McDale forgot all about his boredom problems. This was more than just late breaking news; this was an event, and events were the kind of thing that got you promoted to star reporter! Maybe even a cushy job as anchor!

"We're hearing ground chatter from the police now- and what the hell is that on the ground? It looks like... giant spiders! Holy shit! What is this?"

Outskirts of London, England. Same time.

As a general rule, Muggle forces are not and never have been equipped to deal with Wizards. Oh, sometimes Muggles will pull certain tricks out of their hat- look at the victorious U.S. Abrams unit, for example- but usually, they simply stop, stare, and get their heads torn off.

This happened to be one of those times.

The first units to respond to the flames suddenly engulfing lower London were, of course, the firefighter units, closely followed by police units. The radio chatter of that time is quite informative, and despite the flames that raged throughout most of London that day, a few recordings have survived.

Here is an excerpt of one:

"Unit P12-5, responding to fires in east sector, 13-12, assorted perps spotted in area, believed to be source of flames, I am responding to see if I can make an arrest. Over"

"This is P12-3, I ain't letting you get the credit, you jackass. First one to round up the suspects gets a free beer. Over"

"You're on, ya ass. Course, that'll be if the firefighter squads don't run them over first- boy, those guys drive like bats out of hell. Over"

"With good reason, over"

"Alright, I can see some of the flames- holy shit!"

"What? Unit P12-5, come in!"

"I can't fucking believe this! What the (here, the radio frizzes out, as radios tend to do when shouted into, and his next few words are unintelligible). We're returning fire! Oh God, Barnes and Daniels just got wiped out! What the fu-"

Here, the radio completely cuts off; dead silence reigns for a few moments.

"Unit P12-5! Unit P12-5! Walls! Clive! Damn it! Where are you! HQ, do you read?"

"We read! We're sending in units now! What's the situation? Where are you!"

"We're following P12-5! I gotta find what happened to them! Oh shit!"
Gunfire, screams, then a strange chitterling noise.

"Unit P12-3! Are you alright? Unit P12-3!"

A clunking noise can be heard, then more chittering. (yes it is a word) The roar of flames, before a background noise, becomes far more audible. There are sounds of tapping, as if someone is tossing the radio back and forth in their hands. Then, the button is pressed, and this can be heard:

"Put that down. We've got work to do. Grab your mount and move it, soldier! We got burning and killing to do!"

"But sir, there's this voice coming out of it. How the hell do you work this Muggle contraption anyway?"

"Huh? It works around us? That's strange. Give it to me."

There are some more tapping noises, then the button is pressed again, and a young man's voice can be heard saying this:

"This is General Seamus Finnegan. I represent the Black Tide. We Wizards have come to burn this land to the ground and all in it. And no one will stand in our way. Know that, ye who hear me. We have come. And we shan't leave until the burning is done."

Then, a deadly silence consumed all.

London, England. Same time.

Seamus thrust his Bayonet through the radio receiver and crushed it all to hell. He didn't know why those things still worked around a group of Wizards this large, but he did know how to make it quit working. After wiggling his blade and scrambling the parts inside the car some more, he turned and remounted his spider. The other Dusk Knight had already left, going hunting among the fleeing hordes. Seamus had warned his men not to kill any more Muggles than they had to; the whole idea behind this attack was to create a situation the Ministry couldn't cope with.

In other words, they were here to make the Muggle world know about Wizards.

Seamus grinned. There was no way the Ministry was going to be able to cover this up without withdrawing almost all of their forces from the rest of England. And when they did...

Wizengamot, Ministry of Magic. Same time.

A harried messenger ran into the room, out of breath and scared more badly than he thought he would ever be. The messenger paused for breath, getting air in great heaving gulps, and waved the guards back. They waited there, somewhat confused, and rather abashed at having been sent back by a single wave of the hand.

Gathering their nerves, they walked forward, determined to throw this intruder out. Amelia Bones waved them back.

"Hold," she said, and the guards, glad that their duty had been fulfilled, stepped back to the door. The head guard, who had been explaining to Amelia that the spy they'd caught in the Ministry had revealed, after days of questioning and mental torture, that she was a White Shore spy, waited as well. The messenger coughed, heaved, gulped, and finally choked out:

"London's burning above us!"

Somewhere in London, England. July 23rd. Morning.

Seamus sat astride his spider, breathing in deep and taking in the scent of burning. Ah, nothing quite as refreshing as the smell of battle.

Not that there was that much battling going on. A few police units were shooting at them (guns, having no electrical parts, worked quite well around Wizards, much to Seamus' chagrin) and one firefighter group had accidentally careened into them and killed a few men with sheer weight- but all in all, this was one of the calmest fights Seamus had ever gotten into.

Then he heard more than felt the ground shake, and smiled. Turning his mount around, he began shouting orders to his men.

"Men! Ministry forces are approaching! Dusk Knights, find ambush positions! Spread out in any area that is so far free of flames. Most of this town is gonna be up in flame, but we got a leeway of about an hour. Spread out and fight at will. The one rule is don't get killed. Whenever an hour has passed or your chosen combat position catches fire- whichever happens first- leave the city and report back to the meeting grounds we decided on! For those who have forgotten, it's the small meadow to the west of here. Purger units, continue through the city. March away from our positions! Marauder groups one through five, stay with them! Marauder group six, find a fallback position near here! If a Dusk Knight gets in trouble, they'll come running to you, so be prepared! Also head towards the bridges should we be trapped! Seamus, The Black General, over and out!"

The Dusk Knights took off, scattering into buildings for ambush positions. The Purgers kept walking, under Seamus' orders to spread fire through as much of London as they could. Most of the Marauders stayed with them, but the one company of veterans stayed behind, ready to strike the enemy unawares from their positions in houses, streets, dark alleys.

Terry was leading his special unit of Hell-Burners towards the bridges to protect them and start the houses near them a flame so that they could take them down easier to close them off after they left. Terry also thought of burning the other shore so that they could do the same on the other side. He would have gone to the Leaky Cauldron if it weren't already burned in their last attack on this city.

Seamus found himself a spot in an open window and waited.

Outside London, England. Same time.

The Ministry forces outside England were too shocked, tired, and stunned to sing or make any form of cadence. They simply marched, running as fast as they could, barreling towards London from the closest Wizarding town with a force large enough to help. Of course, since the Ministry had only a rough estimate of how many Tide forces were in the town, they ended up overestimating how many forces were there, and the Ministry approached with over nine thousand men- far more than Seamus had expected.

Expectation is a large part of a military strategy. You must guess what your opponent's next moves are, so you can plan ahead to counter them. You must try to guess your enemy's moves so that you can guide him, pushing him towards a favorable position for yourself.

However...

There are certain expectations one must deal with in warfare. These are the unexpected expectations, ones you don't know are in you until they are wronged. There is a long list of these throughout history, from the Romans expecting Hannibal to fail in the mountains to the Germans assuming they could defeat Russia before winter. These unexpected expectations are the greatest flaw of a military commander, and cause the most damage when exploited. However, because so many commanders don't even know what their own

unexpected expectations are, they are also the hardest flaw to use for an advantage... unless, of course, one possesses great dumb luck.

Seamus possessed great dumb luck. Luck, that ephemeral, blind judge of human existence, had chosen him for a special round of loving this time. For you see, Lady Luck had determined that the commander of the Ministry forces, one Siegfried Leehalt, had lived in London all his young, childhood days. And there were certain sections of the city he loved more than life.

So far, none of them were burning. He intended to keep it that way.

"Colonel Leehalt!" A soldier shouted to him as he rode up on his warhorse. "We've reached the city! What are your orders, sir?"

Leehalt narrowed his gaze. "Squadrons 2-5! Go to positions B-13, C-13, D-19, and F-20! Guard those positions until I tell you otherwise!"

And off went four thousand troops. Now, only five thousand men gathered to hear what the boss had to say.

"Squadron 1, stay with me. Squadrons 6 and 7, circle around the burned area. See if you can trap them inside. Squadrons 8 and 9, you take the east side and west side of the burned area, respectively. Me and Squadron 1 will swing around to the front. We should have them entrapped. Once I give the signal, charge forward and kill everybody in your path. That..." and here Leehalt stopped, because he could still remember the strange, icy feeling that had went through his body upon reading the Ministry's hastily scribbled orders, orders stating to kill every Muggle they could. Shaking it off, he continued in a slightly more subdued tone, "includes Muggles. Ministry orders state we must kill as many Muggles as possible. A special Ministry team is being gathered together and sent in. But it's too big a job. We have to kill every Muggle we can. Especially newspaper workers and reporters. Destroy communications equipment when you can. We are not here just to fight the Tide; we are here to cover this up. Let's go."

And so they set off, preparing to make a trap from which Seamus was not prepared to escape.

Streets of London. 35 minutes later.

Seamus rechecked the bullets in his Bayonet, and upon seeing that they were all there and accounted for, closed the gun with a resounding snap. He'd had fun, taking potshots at Ministry forces in the area (well, potshots probably wasn't the correct term; when you fire a beam that vaporizes whatever it hits, you can't really call anything a potshot) and he hadn't really had to move from his window position. His spider mount, having long since grown bored with his "stand down" order, was busy eating the cat the former owner had left. By the noises it made, the cat was quite tasty.

As Seamus stood there, waiting for the Purgers to report that they had reached the Thames (the next target on their list; they'd been going through an actual checklist Seamus had drawn up, including all the major landmarks of the city- Big Ben was a major target), he heard many voices raised in a cry.

And below him, hundreds of Ministry soldiers began to run down the streets.

"Oh shit," Seamus thought, as he called to his men and began to shout frantic orders. "Oh shit."

"Men!" he shouted, desperate to get a warning out. "Get out of here! Head to the meadow immediately! Drop what you're doing and run for it! The Ministry just attacked! Run dammit run!"

As Seamus grabbed his mount (who had finished eating the cat and was eyeing the parakeet nearby) he heard screams and shouts from his men.

"What is it?" Seamus shouted.

"We're under attack," one soldier reported. "The west side's blocked off! They got us surrounded!"

"Shit!" Seamus yelled. "Okay, new plan! East side, report in!"

"We're okay... wait, there's Ministry forces incoming! Oh hell, it's knights! We're gonna get overrun!"

"Run for it!" Seamus yelled, and Lady Luck graced him again, because right then the head of the Purgers called in.

"Sir, we have reached the Thames."

"Don't burn the bridges!" Seamus shouted. "Repeat, don't burn the bridges! I have an idea! Men, retreat from your positions! Head for the Thames! Purgers, guard those bridges! I don't care if you light the damn river on fire, just keep the bridges safe! And figure out a way to destroy them on command."

"Sir? What's happening?" Terry called in. Seamus' helmet was connected to all of the helmets of his men; the Terry's was connected to all those in the Purgers and Seamus' helmet.

"I don't know, but I'm starting to figure it out," Seamus said bitterly, as more Ministry forces rushed by below. "And it's looking worse and worse as I do."

Near Thames of London. Twenty minutes later.

Almost every Purger was a pyromaniac of some form or another. It wasn't something that had been in them at the start- most of them, anyway- but it was something that had been born in them after days of watching flame and fire shoot from their Skull-Masters, and in special cases Hell-Burners, of smelling smoke and fire and roasting flesh. Any firefighter will tell you that pyromaniacs, despite their penchant for arson, are actually some of the most reliable people in a crisis- they are capable, because of their hunger, of walking into places where even firefighters fear to go, without masks or equipment of any kind, insane grins plastered to their faces, and pulling people out of the flames. There have been many times when the best person for a job is a pyromaniac. They don't like to put the fires out- for obvious reasons- but they are damn good at rescuing others. They are nearly immune to fire, seemingly.

Of course, another part of all this is the knowledge they have of fire. Pyromaniacs obsess over fire, and in the course of their obsession seek to know all they can about their chosen love. Many of them become experts of a sort, knowledgeable about flames of any sort, be they quick burning, slow starting, smoking, or just plain devastating.

The Purgers were no exception. The salvation of the Tide that day lay in the hands of twelve Purgers, made Hell-Burners for their invention, who had, for some reason or another, carried a little off-duty weapon with them. The off-duty weapon was an incredibly powerful bomb the twelve had developed together off of Skull-Master fluid and dragon acid. The resultant mixture was so volatile it made nitroglycerin look like a tamed kitten in comparison. They'd taken it to Seamus, but he'd declared it too dangerous to use, and so it never became standard Purger equipment. He hadn't banned them from carrying it, however (an accidental oversight that again displayed Seamus' ridiculous capacity for luck) and so they were packing their homemade firebombs in their pockets. It also happened to be in the most protected spot on their bodies, right over their hearts. When the order came to leave the bridges up, but make them ready to detonate, the Purgers had grinned and volunteered for sapper duty. They got into their positions and waited.

They didn't wait long.

Tide units were pouring in by the hundreds. All of the men were in full flight, seeking to escape the devastating charge. Maven, the mounted warriors of the Ministry, were right behind them, cutting them down. Spear and sickle (for the Ministry, to make their warriors more terrifying in appearance, had given them short, one handed sickle blades) sang a death song as they whirled in the air and cut them down.

The Tide suffered losses of over two thousand from that charge, most of them Dusk Knights. It was a loss Seamus never forgot, and never forgave. It was also one that he took personally; from that day forward, Leehalt was his number one enemy.

As Seamus and his men charged across the bridges, the Purgers waited, small vials in their hands. And when the last of their men were across, the Purgers put the vials on the ground, twisted them once, and ran like hell.

Air over Thames, same time.

"We're not quite for sure what we're seeing- it looks like knights on horseback down there! They're cutting into the black armored soldiers- ah, wait- the black armors are moving across the bridge! They're retreating... the grey armors have done it! They've pushed

the black armors away from London... looks like the black armors are trying to escape the city. Oh, wait, wait... London special forces have approached! Tanks are waiting for them! They're shooting at the black armors... yes, yes, it's a slaughter, folks, a real slaughter! Hey, wait- the weapons are jamming... what the hell is going on? What are those, meteors? The hell is going on?"

Dan McDale stopped for a breath, then kept rattling on.

"The black armors are still running... doesn't look like they want to fight all that bad. They're trying to get away from the bridges... holy SHIT!"

The bridges went up in a flare of white light. Along with them went over three thousand Ministry troops.

And as the pieces fell, Dan continued his report.

"Oh my God... the bridges are gone, the grey armors just got wiped out... oh my God... there's a few left, they're just standing there, dazed... looks like the grey armors throughout the city are falling back... they're all leaving... the black armors have disappeared. I don't know where they are... can't see them..."

Seamus stood with his men in a magically protected grove that kept them from the sight and sound of others. All of them were weary and weak.

"How many?" Seamus asked fearfully, afraid of the answer but having to know. "How many did we lose?"

"Two whole squadrons," a field commander choked out, tears already gathering in his eyes. "Oh no. Two whole squadrons." He fell to weeping.

"More than that," another said. "I know we lost a lot to the Muggle troops... until we got close enough to disrupt them, they shot us all to hell."

"Men," Seamus said, "never forget who died here. Never forget what we just went through. And never, ever stop making them pay."

A muffled cry of answer went through the group.

"We lost many, and did little," Seamus said, turning his head as the reality of his losses swept over him, "but we can make them pay. The dead cannot revenge themselves. We must."

"For vengeance."

The Fifteenth Marauder Division had lost over half of its members. Each of them stood up when they heard Seamus' weak but strong sigh for vengeance. And each said it to themselves, lowly at first, then stronger, but never louder than a whisper.

"For vengeance. For vengeance. For vengeance."

The Fifteenth Marauder Division had made a pact with itself. The Division which would soon be known as "Hell's Kings" had just begun its darker, second life. The Thirteenth Purger Division joined them after the battle because they felt guilty after all they had made the bombs that destroyed the bridges and left some of their members on the other side.

And ever afterward, even years after the war was over, each member of the Fifteenth Division would gather together on this day, July 23rd, and repeat to themselves these words:

"For vengeance."

Alright as pointed out by Flyte I need to explain some things and use more magic in this story. The only real problem is I have no knowledge of Latin and any translator I come across is wrong or doesn't work for the words I am looking for. I will also answer all of the questions in the current reviews.

To to lazy to login, the story really is more magic-world related then muggle world and but the whole addicted to magic thing might work, because even a muggle can make a potion, as much as Severous hates to admit it. So if Terry or one of the others makes an addictive steroid or something to get them on even playing ground as the magic users only they could use them because Hermione is of the Light and the Ministry is run by fools who forget what muggles can do. To Sufferindux He gets his mage-sight from being a Jester, along with many other things it's just that he was unconsciously tapping into it without going into the full out transformation. He doesn't know the future, but he can see they have potential in certain thing and that with certain training they could become great as that thing. To qwe123 I think you underestimate how lazy the Wizarding world is. The first two years could be taught in one, then the next two could be taught as well the next year, and the final three could be taught in a year and a half. These children as you put it not only had potential they had everything they could possibly want to learn at their finger tips because of the Room of Requirement.

Also I am just going to ignore the flamers that don't know what they are talking about. I like flames I really do, but first of all please tell me what you think is so wrong. Then tell me things that are accurate. Like the fact that my grammar could use some work, but not my spelling because I do check this over multiple times for spelling errors. Also HAVE A POINT. Post some literary venture of your own before you attempt a flame. Think of it as your résumé. If nothing else so we can flame back and please log in so that I don't have to make statements at the top of my chapters. Check your spelling and grammar. There's nothing worse then making a bunch of grammatical errors right in the middle of telling someone else what's wrong with their writing. You lose all credibility. Do it with style. You've heard the saying, I'm sure. 'If a thing is worth doing, it's worth doing well.' If you're actually going to take the time to cut someone down, the least you could do is get their attention. If you intend to be mean, then at least try to come off like the villain, and not like one of his nameless henchmen. Read summary warnings. Trust me. You

don't want to go ripping on people for content that you were clearly warned about. That honestly only makes you look like an idiot. Throw in some amusing word play. When you step into the arena baby, you want to show off you're skills. A truly good flame entertains the crowd. That way people don't just plain hate you outright, you want them to almost look forward to more of your acerbic wit.

There will be a new person coming into the Black Tide and the White Shore soon. Finally thing to say before I start the story ask questions of me in your reviews if you are at all confused.

And The World Turns

All over the world. July 24, English time, morning.

There are some times in human history when someone was in the right place, at the right time, with the right equipment and the right mindset, to do a great thing. There are the Roosevelts and Lincolns, guiding us toward a better future; there are the writers and the poets, who have captured the heart of a nation and written it down in words; there are artists, who in the blink of an eye see an ordinary, everyday scene that told a story and from that eye blink draw forth a masterpiece that will last for decades. There is little more to it than that; no Fate, no guiding hand, just mere coincidence and the choices that people make that decide the course of our history and the course of our lives. There have been times when slaves have held destiny in their hands; there have been times when the simple act of choosing which wine to drink had a profound effect on human history. The results and consequences cannot be dreamed of at the time of the act; but one must choose anyway whether one will do something or whether one will not. Such choices carry great weight, whether they are courses of action or inaction. Anything, no matter how small, affects everything, no matter how big. As a physicist once put it: If a butterfly flaps its wings in Peking, weather in New York will be different.

Of course, the consequences, though never fully guessed, can be predicted. And anyone could see what the Ministry's choice would do. After all, they already had one highly critical reporter in their lands. And what would he do with this?

What would he do?

From "The Daily Prophet", Front Page, July 24 Special Edition, in the year 1 J.R. (Jester's Rise).

"SLAUGHTER IN LONDON"

"Readers, I have something to report to you today. It saddens me greatly to do it; but this is my duty, and I shall not shirk it. No matter what the cost, no matter what the horror, I must tell you what has happened in our world."

"London is dying. There are no ifs, no ands, and no buts. Our Ministry, in whom we have placed so much faith, suffered a crisis yesterday, at the hands of the Black Tide. The Tide assaulted London. And during that assault, Muggle after Muggle saw them. The Ministry sent in a special team to Memory Charm them, but there were too many. So what did our kind and gracious Ministry Do?"

"It slaughtered them. It killed them, by the hundreds. By the thousands. It cast spell after spell, destroyed building after building, and when it was all said and done they easily Memory Charmed the few survivors. Even now, the Muggle World is astir, as rivers of fresh crimson flow down the streets of London. The blood of babes is now on the Ministry's hands."

"Ladies and Gentlemen, I can no longer serve a government in which I do not believe. This is my last call."

"Ye, who hear me, trust me now. We must stop them."

"Or the next blood on their hands... will be yours."

"Alexander Ceras, Former Reporter for the Daily Prophet."

Approximately one hour after this piece was released, Alexander Ceras was found in his apartment by Ministry forces, packing up to leave (his destination was listed as the White Shore by the Ministry officials, but in reality it was the Tide and his boss, Harry). He was caught, charged, and thrown in jail on grounds of treason and insubordination against the government. Three hours later, he was let free by the jailer, who had read his piece over twelve times, finally deciding in the end that the best thing he could do right now

was to free Alexander and help him in any way he could. Alexander fled the scene, the unnamed jailer with him. The jailer was eventually shot and killed by Ministry archers, after the initial alarm went out that Alexander was escaping. Alexander himself escaped, vaulting over a wall and disappearing into the countryside. Within days, he was back at a printer, and copies of the very first issue of Underground Hope became available to the public at no charge at all. Of course, when the rebel movement began to grow, they had to charge for each issue; after all, you can't run an army on empty coffers.

But that came later.

CNN News, July 24, 12:00 p.m.

"More on the story of the unusual crisis that struck London yesterday. Apparently, there are several conflicting stories... oddly; these stories seem as if they fall into geographic lines. Those residents coming from one side of the Thames state those strange black-armored soldiers that looked like medieval knights were the culprits, along with a second group of gray armored knights. Residents on the opposite bank find the idea preposterous and state that such lies will only worsen the great tragedy that has already swept through London and that those spreading such lies should be ashamed. These residents believe that some strange fire broke out and, in eerie mimicry of the Great Fire that once destroyed the city, consumed most of the area in flames. Authorities have no leads but believe that some form of explosion occurred here, possibly because of stored fuel tanks. Yet this does not explain the large number of strange corpses found at the scene, some wearing black and gray armor. We'll keep you posted, so leave it here on CNN, the world's biggest..."

Fox News Network, July 24, 12:44 p.m.

"This just in. We go to London, where our special reporter, Johnathan Fawkes, is reporting. John"

"I must tell you, Rick, a lot's happened in London while you were gone. As you know, a massive fire swept through London leaving behind a huge bloodwake of destruction in its path. (Though this is off the subject, the reporter eventually got good reviews from his superiors for the word "bloodwake", which eventually got absorbed

into the American consciousness as a word for the trail any large and destructive force- like an army, for example- leaves behind itself). However, new reports are unearthing strange sights- men and women clothed in armor, huge spider-like carcasses, and horses in full battle dress. And even more distressing is the attack on the workers at the scene a few minutes ago, when a large spider thing much like the already found corpses attack rescue workers attempting to pull an old woman out of a hole in the ground. The spider was eventually shot dead, but that in and of itself reveals a strange power that seems to be working over poor brokenhearted London. Pistols will work, our sources say, but shotguns and rifles refuse to fire, and automatic weapons are out of the question. Likewise, cars tend to shut down when driven near the destroyed area, forcing workers to use hand drawn carts to carry off the dead and the wounded. GPS and certain cell phones still work, yet most other equipment falters and fails long before it reaches the "dead zone", as some people are calling it. Radios will work for short transmissions, and it is these that the police are using to coordinate the rescue efforts. The death toll is already at thirty thousand and is expected to rise. This is the worst disaster to befall England in years, ever since the..."

Jester's Keep, Oceania. Same time.

Harry flicked off the Muggle television. (He just happened to have this in a lead and gold room so that he could actually view it) Hmm. Interesting.

He turned to Seamus, who sat near him.

"Your ploy worked" he said.

Seamus mumbled something.

Harry sighed and put his hand on his friend's shoulder. "Seamus. Don't take this personally. This is war. You're bound to lose some people."

Seamus shook his head. He had aged years in a day. "But so many..."

"It is not too many. Look! Already the Ministry's actions have swelled our ranks. We have received double what we lost. Just because many died does not mean that all have died."

"You can say that with ease" Seamus said. "You are not with them everyday. You are an abstract figure to the troops- you're the dark hero, the tragic king, the laughing jester who knows no bounds and dances in your black lit castle, summoning to yourself all the lost and disenchanted souls of the world. You're a figurehead, my friend. You have the power to completely destroy everything that we worked for, but not to connect with your people. You are an immortal that will change whenever he likes, but your people cannot connect to you and you cannot connect to them."

Harry looked at him but said nothing.

"I, on the other hand, am someone they can look at and talk to. I am down there with them constantly, fighting beside them, working beside them, training beside them. I am more than their commander; I am their friend, their brother in arms. I'm someone they can look at and argue with, someone whom they can deal with on a non-legendary scale. The enemy calls me the 'Black General'" and here a ghost of a smile flickered onto Seamus' face "but truth be told, to the troops I'm just General Seamus. I'm just the boss. I'm not... supposed to be an executioner..."

Here he shook his head. "It's hard, Harry. Very hard."

Harry sighed. "Seamus, the road ahead will contain many deaths and battles just like the one you fought. You have carried me through the most dangerous time for the Tide. And... If you do not think that you can take it anymore... you can resign with full honors and pride of place. You can become a military advisor and remove yourself from it all, if you wish. You are my friend, Seamus, and I do not want to see you fall."

Seamus looked at Harry and surprised him by saying "No."

"Are you sure" Harry said. "I meant everything I just said."

"I know you did" Seamus said "but I cannot resign. Not yet. There are... things I must do..." Seamus shook his head. "I can't back down now. How cowardly would I be, if I resigned now, just when things

were getting hard? You say that I've carried you across the dangerous part... but I say that the danger has just begun. With all the things that are starting up now I can't afford to back down to the enemy over some lost men." He looked at Harry and nodded. "So I'll keep fighting, not for the glory or power in it, but because it's the right thing to do." Seamus looked down at the floor, and then chuckled. "Right thing to do, if there was ever a saying I never thought I'd use again..."

Harry grinned too. "Yeah, I hear that."

The two turned and walked out of the room.

Jester's Keep Oceania, England, July 30th. 1:00 p.m.

In his guise as the Jester (his preferred form when dealing with his people), Harry nodded to his servants from his throne, listening to and judging the various laws, bills, and wishes that were brought to him by the Arbiters. Blaise was still training in her powers and couldn't yet control all of the urges of a jester so she was not able to take over for him in here. One of them, a bill proposed by a young lieutenant named Shawn, particularly intrigued him; it stated that criminals charged with murder or rape would be used as test subjects for the Tide. Up until this point, murderers and rapists were summarily executed (murderers by decapitation, rapists by having their penises and groin area cut out of their bodies with a knife) but as test subjects they would be infinitely more useful. Harry thanked the lieutenant, who snapped a proud salute back at Harry, and said that the matter would be considered later. Harry also noticed that he had the small sign on his left breast pocket that stated that he was part of the Enchanters.

Harry had a habit of taking most bills to the Ebony Flame, where he and the others argued over their various merits and detractions, finally deciding on a "final" copy that would be passed and made into law. The Writ of Law was being added to daily, and one high-ranking Arbiter once joked that pretty soon, the Tide really would be a country- complete with confusing laws. Harry privately agreed with him, but he was doing his best to prevent the absurdities and madness that always seem to arrive whenever law is made. Of course, Harry himself didn't have to deal with these things; Ginny and Fleur, as Lord Arbiters, and the lesser Arbiters beneath them dealt with all that. A supreme court of sorts, called the Order of

Arbiters, had been created, and it was swamped with problems, most of them from the laws on taxes, which Harry had just instated a few days ago. The sheer number of people who had attempted to dodge taxes was staggering; Neville had told Harry rather dryly that those who paid taxes were the exception rather than the rule. Harry had been afraid a civil war would start over it; but the flood of evasions slowed to a trickle as the Arbiters dealt swift and sure punishment. The punishment of being sent to the Boneyards (as they now had a major or minor place in everyone of the cities that the Tide controlled.) to work for the Necromancers for three months was more than enough to scare most people into paying their gold. Ginny had given strict orders that workers at the Boneyards were not to be harmed in any way; the Boneyards were scary enough to those who were unused to it, and Harry did not want to be seen as a monster. A humiliating but not directly harmful punishment was enough to put people back on the right track and keep their goodwill.

Besides, there were enough dead things at the Boneyards already.

As Harry nodded to a group of Elementalists who had proposed a bill to move the Orb of Fire from it's position in the Keep to a building outside (the bill would never get to the Flame; Harry had already shot it down in his mind) and watched them leave, an Arbiter walked up, bowing to Harry as he approached.

Dean opened his mouth and began speaking. Harry ignored him; his words were unimportant. He was a low arbiter and often had times where his old Gryffindor self takes over for moments that were inappropriate to them. Dean finished, and Harry was able to say "It will be considered" before too much time elapsed and anyone noticed anything. Everyone assumed he'd been mulling it over and he promptly forgot about it. Dean nodded, and turned to leave

Some hours later, court was finished, and Harry retired to his private room. There, he taught Blaise how to control herself well in jester form. Blaise noticed that her actions were always more violent then before and she was wanting for pain and destruction. She promptly asked what it was about, and he merely said it was what most jesters (he had researched them after all) did and tried to control for their first decade of life as a jester. He watched as five o' clock rolled around and then both left to sleep for even they had need for sleep. He knew Samuel was eventually going to start asking him if he had secretly joined the vampire race. He could care less at the moment.

North-East of Durmstrang, the shore of Russia, July 30, 5:30 p.m.

Ron scratched his head as he and his men finished completing a new section of the dock they were building. The destroyer Sea Lion, renamed by the White Shore as the W.S.O.F. (which stood for "White Shore Ocean Force") Blizzard Gale, was currently floating in the only other dock they'd managed to complete. Considering that the entire White Shore navy consisted of the Blizzard Gale and nothing else, the port wasn't small at all. In fact, it was twice as large as it needed to be.

Old Grim snorted. His sense of humor was quite dry, really, and tended towards sarcasm. It drove Hermione crazy, sometimes. But that was just the way he was, now. A dry sense of humor wasn't all that much to change, when the whole world was shifting and turning under the incredible forces now walking the land. Better this than the catastrophic changes in so many of his brethren around the world, that fatal slip and slide down into the dark maw of nothingness, the nothingness upon which Harry Potter fed and lived and breathed. No, a change in one's sense of humor was not too drastic, compared to everything else that was going on. At the very least his sense of humor was nothing like anyone in the Black Shore.

The shore wasn't as icy and bleak as other parts of Russia were- not by a long shot- but they were still cold, and Ron drew his fur cape tighter about himself as the wind blasted through in another roaring gale. One of his men looked up and yelled "It's finished, sir! Last piece in place"

"Good" Ron shouted back. "Let's get back to the bears, then."

The men turned and began heading towards the great bears upon which they had put their packs and the equipment necessary to build the new section of the dock. The docks were in a very out of the way place that, up until about a month ago, had been covered in ice. Once the Bleak Anchor had captured the Ministry vessel Sea Lion, however, the troops had come down here and, with the help of some of the great monsters of the ocean that the Beast-keepers summoned (Ron had watched as an enormous thing, something barely glimpsed beneath the surface of the ice covering the water surface, bucked once underneath the ice and shattered the frigid coldness above it into tiny icebergs and chunks of frost), remade it

into a port. Ron and his men had figured out how to keep the water warm by casting an Everburn spell, which created a ball of fire in the middle of the waters. The spell had taken an enormous toll on its casters (seventy three in all; it had been a powerful spell), but the spell had been designed so that it was easy to maintain once started. Now, twenty people stayed here at all times, maintaining the spell that kept the "season" (as some were calling it) burning in the waters. Other than these people, in a small underground barracks nearby, no one stayed here. That would change later, as the White Shore began to depend more and more on its naval force to keep it in the war; but for now, there were only twenty people, who would all be coming back with the bears. Every month, Ron and a team of workers came out here carrying both the equipment to continue working on the docks and twenty fresh people to replace those who had spent an entire month down here keeping the flame burning. Once the torch was passed (so to speak), the twenty who had been here came back with Ron and his team, and the new twenty settled in for a month out here. No one, not even Voldemort (who, of the groups involved in the war, had the greatest resources when it came to intelligence) knew of its existence here.

The port had been nicknamed "Cape Ass Freeze" by the troops. It was a fitting name, Ron thought; along with everything else, his ass was indeed cold.

Walking back to the bears, Ron suppressed another smirk.

Undisclosed location in England, same day, similar time.

Fred smirked as he looked at his troops. They had been increasing as the power of the Tide increased. They were the thieves and the pranksters, the cruel and the homeless, the spies and the scouts. He had the best information network in Europe and Asia, in matters both mundane and magical. His squibs and mundanes' preferred the term. He had created, to mundanes', a super addictive drug that not only made the person insanely loyal to the creator, it also released all the restraints put on the body. A little known fact of the body, it only really used below 10% of its real muscle and strength. Amazing feats of strength and such can all be attributed to the body temperately releasing these restraints. In truth a child of the age of 5 could potentially throw a car. They could also crush their own skulls in by smiling. The only time they died was when they couldn't get more of the drug, they were killed, or they killed themselves with

their released muscle. He had perfected it on others then himself. He killed the others and then took the secret. His senses were now considered superhuman, he could break steel with his teeth, his bones had strengthened so that he couldn't destroy them with his strength and he didn't even need to use more then one dose. The others would never get it, Harry and his Ebony flame might but no one else.

His second in command was sending an astral projection up to him. Fred turned and looked at the man who was his best spy, and nodded for him to talk. This was his spy in the White Shore. "Fred, they have constructed an Everburn spell for their dock this is my first opportunity to talk to you since my last report. They are still suspicious of me but I think that I will be fine. Also from what I have gathered you will soon be joining the Black Tide, please do not tell anyone but Harry who I am."

Fred responded "Very well. My men and I will soon join the Tide, and then the blackness in the shore shall come forth as we fall onto their sand. Are all your men loyal?"

The man said "Absolutely. I have no spies in my ranks and our mind shields are second to none."

Fred said "Very well take care."

He turned as the astral projection dissipated. He had troops to move so that he may join the Tide in their coming war.

Jester's Keep Oceania, England, same time

The elemental orb of air was arguing with itself again. It had been going at it with itself for over three months. It was fighting one of the spirits it had consumed. The spirit supported the Tide well the orb wanted to stay absolutely neutral. Another section of it wanted to go to the Shore to fight against these... beings, as that part of it did not acknowledge them as human. So far the Shore was winning and the orb and Tide were too busy fighting each.

Many hours later.

The orb let lose a pulse of power that woke everyone in Oceania. Everyone of them being trained warriors immediately got on their

gear and headed for the Keep. Blaise and Harry were the first to arrived being that their rooms were the closest to where the elemental orbs were contained. A woman with blue hair, white eyes, and curls that continually went through a cycle like a cyclone. She had an ageless face, and the body of a grown woman that would make normal women jealous and models want to become more like her.

She looked at them and said "Harry the Jester King and Blaise the Jester of Pain I welcome you. I am Amia"

You decide if she is going to support the Tide or the Shore.

Bountries on the Black Tide

Harry Potter (600 Thousand Galleon Dead from Ministry. 300 thousand Galleon Dead from Voldemort) "The Jester King" or "The Jester of Madness"

Seamus Finnigan (200 Thousand Galleons Alive/Dead, Ministry. 175 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 100-Thousand Dead, Voldemort) "The Black General"

Neville Longbottom (200 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 120-Thousand Dead) "Master of Water"

Ginny Weasley (150 Thousand Galleons Dead, Ministry. 175 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 100-Thousand Dead, Voldemort) "Lady of the Dead" or "The Black Lady"

Blaise Zabini (150 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 120-Thousand Dead, Ministry. 195 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 100-Thousand Dead, Voldemort) "The Jester of Pain"

Draco Malfoy (175 Thousand Galleons Alive/Dead, Ministry. 150 Thousand Galleons Alive/100-Thousand Dead, Voldemort.) "King of Beasts"

Cho Chang (160 Thousand Galleons Alive/Dead) "Lady of Monstrosity"

Padma Parvati (150 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 120-Thousand Dead)
"Queen of Earth"

Luna Lovegood (145 Thousand Galleons Alive/Dead) "Lady of Destruction"

Terry Boot (145 Thousand Galleons Alive/Dead, Ministry. 175 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 100-Thousand Dead, Voldemort) "Lord of Hellfire"

Samual (145 Thousand Galleons Dead) "Lord of Misfits"

Fleur Delacour (140 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 120-Thousand Dead)
"The Metal Winged Lady"

Victoria Heavenwalker (140 Thousand Galleons Dead) "the Heart Striker"

Wedge (130 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 110 Thousand Dead)
apprenticed under Terry Boot. NKN

Richard Spithe (130 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 110 Thousand Dead)
"Secondary General"

Alex Vicks (130 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 110 Thousand Dead)
"Secondary General"

Current bounties on the White Shore

Hermione Granger (200 Thousand Galleons Dead) "the Snow Lady"

Ron Weasley (175 Thousand Galleons Dead) "Old Grim"

Walter Andrews (160 Thousand Galleons Dead) "Beast master"

Kaleb Isaacs (150 Thousand Alive/Dead) "Robin Hood"

Jimmy Peakes (150 Thousand Alive/Dead) "Serpent Slayer"

Current organizations in Black Tide.

Marauders are the basic soldier and terror squad. Their leader is Seamus who only takes orders from Harry or Blaise depending on the situation. His second in command is Vick and Spithe.

Purgers are those with Skull-masters. Their leader is Terry Boot who helps make the Skull-masters and is part of the Enchanters Guild. Terry follows Harry and then Seamus' orders.

Necromancers are those that raised the dead. It was controlled by Ginny. She took orders only from Harry and requests from Seamus.

Elementalist is those that control the elements. Some Purgers are part of the Fire Elementalists but instead of staffs they use their Skull-masters as ways to cast spells. All of the Eclipse is in some part of it. Some Krakens are part of it but not many. Neville is the commander of the Elementalist. He takes orders from Harry and sometimes Seamus. He also learned military strategy, from muggles, so to better command them in battle.

Enchanters are those that make the weapons. Some battle with other groups but most don't. Leader is Cho Chang. They follow Harry's orders.

The Eclipse is the demolition experts. Their leader is Luna who follows Harry's orders then Seamus'. She is also part of the more destructive side of the Enchanters Guild. practice

The Kraken is the beast tamers organization. Their leader is Draco who follows Harry's orders then Seamus'.

The Sword fish are the assassins. Their leader is Blaise then Daphne. Both of who only take orders from Harry.

The Great White is the interrogation, slavery, and torture organization and is composed mainly of fear-casters. Their leader is Blaise and then Tracey. Both only take orders from Harry.

Chimera is living experiments that are used in battle. Whipstitch is the official leader but is commanded by Cho Chang so she is in command of this unit. She takes orders from Harry and then Seamus.

Barbarians are those that use their rage to power their magic. They use their magic to surpass the human limit and some even get greatly angered and more powerful by pain. They are the opposite of the Monks who seek inner peace. They are lead by, formerly Nymphadora Tonks, now Dora Tonks and Fleur Delacour. They take orders from Harry and Seamus.

Misfits are creatures that have joined Harry, to find haven and take vengeance on the wizarding world that suppressed them. They ranged from werewolves, to vampires, to giants, to veela, to just about every other intelligent creature. Their leader is called Samuel and is a vampire. They take orders from Seamus and Harry.

Current White Shore organization

Crabs (paladins) are those that serve the light. They are stubborn and unmoving. Their leader is Ron. He takes orders from Hermione

Animals (beast tamers) they are those that bond with Beasts, and are angry at the Kraken for enslaving the beast of nature. They have bonds with the beast of nature so far that their own bodies change to look like them. They are lead by Walter Andrews who is supported by Charlie Weasley who is a new member. He takes orders from Hermione and Ron.

Plants (druids) they are those that control nature itself. They are angry at Harry for destroying the Forbidden forest. They are lead by Patil Parvati. She takes orders from Ron and Hermione.

Sands (warriors) are the basic soldiers. They have the greatest amount among them as well as some of their best soldiers. They are lead by Kaleb Isaacs. He takes orders from Ron and Hermione.

Fire (clerics) they are the healers and help improve battling conditions. They are lead by Hermione who in turn leads everyone in the White Shore.

Calm (monks) are those that have used their magic to give their bodies supernatural limits. They are the more melee fighter and work with the Warriors often. They seek an inner peace. Their leader is George. He takes orders from Hermione and Ron.

Enchanters are those that make the weapons of the White shore. They are powerful and involved with all of the groups. They are lead by Percy Weasley. They take orders from Hermione.

Trees (rangers) they are those that are like the druids in that they live in nature. They are some of the more survivalist of the White Shore. They are lead by Jimmy Peakes. He is descended from Glanmore Peakes who was slayer a powerful Great sea serpent as he himself has. He takes orders from Hermione and Ron

Silver out.

Jester's Keep, Oceania, 3:00 p.m., Aug. 3, First Year of the War of the Long Twilight.

Harry sat on his throne and brooded. He did not want to brood; but he had to brood. Without doing something, he would focus on Blaise and how she was currently in France to negotiate to some towns to side with the Tide. Seamus was down in Europe, somewhere near Spain, attacking the Ministry's biggest single harbor. The harbor, called MuddlingDale, was usually so well-defended that it would be suicide to go near it, much less attack it; but with the events in London, it was now a free-for-all, and Seamus intended to reap as much benefit from it as possible. He was doing a good job of it, too; his timing was perfect. Had he struck too soon after the attack on London, the Ministry's attention would not be so caught up in the aftermath that they could not fight back. Had he struck too late, they would have been returning from dealing with it, which could have caught him with his pants down, so to speak. Now, however, was the perfect time, because the Ministry's forces were all centered on London. MuddlingDale Harbor was open and waiting for Seamus to put it to the flame.

Padma was off screwing around somewhere in France, building up fortifications around Lunas, or some other such thing. Fleur had been complaining recently about the lack of defenses Lunas possessed, so Padma had went down there to stop her screaming. Harry shook his head. Damn. Neville was currently teaching. Samuel was recruiting and teaching. Draco was still getting used to having only one eye and doing so in a combat setting. Ginny and Luna were both down at Lunas mining for the dead and minerals or experimenting with the powers of Air. Amia had bonded with Luna near instantly. She had made her the queen of Air well Amia remained Mistress of Air being like Neville in that regard but more powerful because she didn't have to fight for her powers. Amia spent most of her time with Luna so she was in Lunas as well. Cho was making new additions to the Chimera units and from what he heard she was adding things for air and sea support. Terry was speaking with his Hell-Burners who had expanded to nearly three dozen and telling them how to make and maintain their Hell-Burners. Dora was currently training her soldiers, and Harry was absentmindedly sending his maddening influence there to make sure she was as much a monster as all of the Ebony Flame. Daphne was currently hunting Sirius Black, who was still avoiding Death or Capture, Interrogation and then Death.

Harry sat on his throne and brooded. He then went into a trance to watch what Blaise was doing. Why that little tease! Harry thought

Cape Sunsea (a.k.a. Cape Ass Freeze), shore of Russia, near Durmstrang. Same time.

Sirius Black looked up into the sky. The soldiers, all of whom were very freaked out by his appearance (and all of whom, with the exception of the commander, still thought he was a horrible villain and mass murderer, not being told by Ron and Hermione who he really was), stood around nervously, eyes almost twitching as they looked at each other and back at Sirius, keeping him at sword point, also trying to keep themselves as far back as possible without losing the ability to stab him to death in seconds if he tried anything. Sirius found his less-than-warm welcome somewhat amusing, especially since he'd come up here to help them. Buckbeak, who was currently tethered outside, was pissed at being left out in the cold and was busy letting everyone know, in loud roaring screams, exactly what he thought about all this, and the White Shore too. Sirius wished that his long-term companion would hush- his scratchy, terrifying screams were making the poor soldiers about him even more nervous than they had been before, jumping every time they heard him cry out, sword points jumping with them, which caused Sirius a great deal of worry (he thought, wryly, that they might well kill him by accident, at the rate they were going). Thinking about Buckbeak gave Sirius something to chew over, however.

Buckbeak had followed him, amazingly, and when Sirius had gotten off the train to board the smuggler's boat, Buckbeak had suddenly appeared with him. Paying the smuggler for waiting (hell, it wasn't like Sirius was going to need the money), Sirius told him he was leaving and hopped on Buckbeak unknowingly leaving them to all die at the hands of a pissed off Daphne Greengrass. He might have tried to convince Buckbeak to go home, where he should have been in the first place (Sirius was trying his best to protect him) but Sirius had thought that, if Buckbeak was going to be so honorable as to follow his friend, then the least Sirius could do would be to repay his kindness and let him tag along without being bothered by silly little moral questions. So Sirius hopped on Buckbeak, waved to the bemused smuggler, and took off, hauling ass for the north. A few select spells had kept both of them warm, and soon they'd reached

the cold, frozen north. And then they'd gotten challenged, a challenge which had surprised the hell out of Sirius.

"Halt, and land! These are the lands of the White Shore, and you are trespassing upon these frozen grounds! Halt, or the winds themselves will rise up against ye! Halt and land"

Sirius, deciding that it would be a good idea not to piss off the owner of that voice (who sounded more than ready to summon up winds, spears, arrows, and anything else that would take Sirius out of the sky), told Buckbeak to land, and Buckbeak did so, though he was a bit leery of putting himself on the ground (Buckbeak liked the sky- on the ground, he was slightly awkward, despite his horse heritage). When Sirius landed, two White Shore soldiers had walked up, both of them carrying staves and apparently quite adept at working with the cold in their magics. Sirius had felt more than seen the binding prison of extreme cold they'd dumped over both him and Buckbeak. He had warned his companion not to move, telling him that the temperature in the air around them had just been dropped to fatal levels, and moving was going to be a bad idea. Buckbeak, cursing Sirius in his head for a fool, had sullenly complied. The two wizards had taken them to a small, almost nondescript cabin made of some stone-like material, tied Buckbeak outside, then taken Sirius inside (the jail cell of frost following him the whole way) and had the commander called White Shore HQ. That had been an hour ago. About twenty minutes after his arrival, someone finally recognized him, and ever since then, Sirius had spent most of his time trying to dodge shakily advancing sword points. Sirius thought that he could probably escape without doing one bit of magic- all he'd have to do was scream loudly, and the already badly spooked soldiers might well pass out. Or run him through, Sirius added, noting that though most of them were obviously scared of him, the two wizards who'd dragged him in merely stood by the entrance, one looking in, one looking out, wands at the ready, calm and unafraid. They'd probably take command if Sirius attempted anything, and both of them looked quite prepared to take his life if they had to. Since he wasn't planning on doing anything, Sirius was perfectly content to be in their hands. Not having anything else to do, he scanned the room for the fiftieth time since coming here.

The walls were white, fitting, he guessed, for a group whose first name happened to be that color ("White Shore" still stuck out in Sirius' mind as a ridiculous counter to the highly original- and slightly

spooky- name "Black Tide"), and there were few decorations- just a picture here and there of a man or woman, usually smiling or blowing kisses at the camera, which made Sirius guess that these were the boyfriends and girlfriends (or, possibly, husbands and wives- with all that had happened, Sirius wouldn't rule that out) of those gathered here, taken so that they could always be reminded of the ones they cared for, even as far away as this little outpost here. Sirius had seen much the same thing in the First War, with Wizards often packing small pictures of their loves with them. A few small benches (occupied when Sirius entered, empty now as the ones sitting on them leapt up to grab swords and hold them to his throat) were placed against the walls in the room. A small rack of weapons, mostly empty now, completed the room's bare furnishings.

The room had three exits, one leading to the command post (or so Sirius assumed; that was where the commander had come from, anyway) and one leading to what one soldier had said, in a remark to his boss, the "comm room". Sirius figured they had a crystal ball or some other cheap form of short-distance communication here, to quickly reach their bosses in Durmstrang. The third exit was the strangest one- an open doorway, big enough for one human to walk in comfortably (two small humans could possibly squeeze through with mild discomfort on both sides), it led outside, affording a view of the blinding snow that circled all about the encampment. The soldiers looked out it every now and then, as if seeing things out there, but Sirius couldn't make heads or tails of the white all around him. It was blinding, and he couldn't even see Buckbeak (though he could hear him well enough) despite the fact that Buckbeak was not five feet from the door. He also noted that when they did look outside their eyes gave a small white glow that vanished as soon as they looked away. It wasn't even that the blizzard was that bad; it just reflected the light in such a way that Sirius kept losing track of where his eyes were, as if the light distracted his focus enough to prevent him from ever attaining real sight in the storm. The noise of the wind didn't reach them in here, oddly enough, and no snow entered (or cold, either- it was nice and warm inside), so Sirius guessed that a force field of some sort was in place over the door. Check of room completed, Sirius turned to stare at the wall again.

A few minutes later, there was a noise outside, and the earth shook slightly. The two wizards looked out the door. Sirius strained his eyes, but saw nothing. Moments later, he heard a loud thumping noise, one that was rather rhythmic in intensity, and in a few minutes

he figured it out. Footsteps. It was footsteps of something very, very big. Worried that a dragon had just decided to attack the encampment (and believing it to be just his luck if one did), Sirius turned to look out into the storm. Nothing... but... wait...

The form of a mighty bear became visible, almost right next to the door, a great brown bear, aged, with mighty scars running down its flanks. The bear shook, and its entire form became white when it shook- as white as snow. Attached to it was a great harness, made so that it didn't interfere with the bears' natural movements, packs and gear hanging off its sides and rising slowly up the creature's great sides. On top, in a small harness area, a group of riders sat, clothed in robes of purest white that showed nothing of their faces or their forms. They detached and got down, walking in from the cold with no great hurry or no great stateliness. When they got in, the two wizards nodded to them, and said "Sir, we have the prisoner here." The bear-riders turned and nodded at them, and as they did so, Sirius caught a glimpse of two faces. Both seemed familiar, somehow- and yet they were the faces of strangers, too.

The first, a man, had red hair inside the great white robe he wore over everything on him. His face was old and lined- not with wrinkles, but with worry and suffering. Without knowing anything else about him, Sirius immediately thought of the man as "Grim". His mouth was set in a tight line. His eyes, which seemed almost shadowed despite the light in the room, were deep and dark so much so that Sirius almost considered him to be a Dark mage. As he stepped inside and threw off his hood, the man seemed almost cut from glass, as if he was not really a man but some being that had been set out in harsh, straight lines and made to walk. Sirius thought the effect commanding, and found himself straightening his posture almost without realizing it.

The second to come in was not a face he thought he recognized, but the third one was- a strange face that reminded him of his only glimpse of the Queen of the Goblins, who, in contrast to the general ugly thorniness of her race, was beautiful- but not beautiful as humans would define it. She looked like all other goblins: long goblin nose, small body, hair sticking out everywhere, body shriveled and seemingly wrinkled, head like a bowling ball... her personality was not even that great, being as short and gruff as most goblins were. And yet, she was beautiful, despite all that... the Queen of the Goblins had simply radiated something, some sort of grandeur that

simply caught the eye and made one unaware of pitiful physical differences between the viewed and the viewer and made one realize that something made that person great. This woman had that same touch of perfection, of lady-ness, of nobility, maybe even royalty, about her, and when she looked at him, Sirius felt that same mixture of kindness and strength that the Queen of Goblins had possessed (although, simply for the record, the Queen of Goblins had not been a sweet-natured person at all- Dumbledore, who'd been with Sirius at the time, had cheerfully referred to her afterwards as "Spittooth Sally"- but she had still been kind, in her own fashion, to them) and, with this strange glimpse at another's soul past him, noticed the shocking streak of white hair in curly brown. The woman threw off her hood, and then the rest of the riders- seven in all- took off their hoods, and all attention turned towards him. Sirius, used to being stared at (and this was a lot like the court that had sentenced him to Azkaban, bare room and all), simply looked back at them, not with hostility or worry, but merely waiting.

A moment passed, brief but interminable. Then the one Sirius had thought of as Grim smiled, and said "Black, it has been a long time."

The other, the lady, smiled too, and said "It's good to see you, Sirius."

And then the bubble of incomprehension burst over him, and Sirius' heart leapt for joy.

"Ron! Hermione!" he shouted, scaring his jailors all over again but taking no notice in the happiness flooding through his veins "I can't believe it! Is it really you?"

They nodded. "Yes, Sirius" Hermione said, smiling at him, a smile that was both familiar and far more powerful than the one he remembered. "It's really us."

Ron smiled too, and years washed off his face; he became closer to the laughing, always slightly freaked out lad he once was, and waving his hand with a smile, said "Swords down, men! He's a friend- a good one and a missed one. Welcome to the White Shore, Sirius Black."

Sirius smiled. "I think" he said, for the first time realizing it as truth "that you just welcomed me home."

Wizarding Town of Muddling Dale, shores of Spain, Europe, same time.

Seamus, from his position atop his spider mount, stared into the sky. The flames of the town were soaring, as new buildings were consumed, as the lives of all those here was put to the torch- and found good for burning. Flames rose, and the song of the Purgers rose with it, floating above and beyond the carnage like some ancient chant. It was, in its own way, glorifying the slaughter, and Seamus found it funny that evil should have its own choir. He found it so funny, in fact that he burst out laughing.

He would not laugh like that for a long time, after this night. MuddlingDale was one of that summer's last victories, and soon General Seamus- and everyone with him- would be desperately, desperately busy trying to stay alive. Time, the great nemesis of the Tide but not the monsters of the Ebony Flame, had caught up to them, and the full brunt and force of the other militaries was soon to be directed at them.

But Seamus did not know that. He turned his face from the burning sky and charged down into the harbor, dragging his men with them, all of them laughing and singing.

Near Windgleam, Ministry outpost on Lashwind Toll harbor, August 8th 11 pm

Ron looked up into the night sky. It was dark up there, bitterly dark, but he thought he still saw some light up there. He smirked. Ah. Stars, the White Shore was weaving a culture around itself (much like the Black Tide was), and that culture seemed to consist entirely of things about stars. Stars, stars, stars, everywhere star, and for some reason to Ron it all felt right. Stars decorated much of the artwork of the Shore, and the songs being composed invariably had something about stars in them. The people of the White Shore (and they truly were a people now: babies were being born at an astonishing rate, so much so that Durmstrang's Medical Ward was now an impromptu nursery held together by one very much worried Head Nurse) were fascinated by stars. Much of the lost science of Astrology had been unearthed again, and many members of the White Shore were amateur astronomers of one sort or another.

At Durmstrang, where an oddly cozy, homely feeling seemed to prevail, a meteor passing overhead was cause for celebration among the soldiers, all going out to set up their telescopes and stare at the skies to see the flaming snowball passing overhead. Ron himself did not participate in such activities; he was usually sharpening his blade while the others were gone, begrudging them the time lost through stargazing when they could be practicing and enhancing their fighting ability. Hermione had told him that too much work would drive them to leave; but Ron had pointed out to her (rather coldly) that the individual fighting strength of their men was the one thing they could count on. The Tide's soldiers were naturally savage and evil, and so fought well. (Unknowing that some of the Units in the Black Tide were as crazy, and some more, about training then they were. The best example being the Kraken, the Barbarians, the Maruaders, and the Elementalist. Two of them because their leaders had personal issues against some of the White Shore, one because he was that crazy and wanted his soldiers to be the best but most common units, and the last to prove herself capable of being in her position). The Ministry had so many soldiers they didn't have to fight well. The Shore was the one group who honestly needed to train and train and train.

Ron knew, in his heart knew, that they didn't yet have the training they needed to take on the other groups. Ron honestly believed that a force of their soldiers, against an equal force of enemy soldiers from the Black Tide would get slaughtered, and they stood some chance against an equal force of the Ministry soldiers but the ministry could just overwhelm them with numbers or outlast them because of their superior numbers.

Right now, that fear was omnipresent; here they were, heading out in the darkness, to attack a Ministry naval outpost. Ron hoped his soldiers were up to the task. The soldiers themselves, all hunkered down in the single ship the White Shore actually had, were silent (as ordered), and waiting as the ship gently floated along the sea. The Ministry naval post, located on Lashwind Toll (named for the ferocious windstorms that raged upon the island every now and then), was a small, poorly armed place, and the force coming towards it intended to take it quickly and quietly. The Ministry had considered increasing the defenses around Lashwind Toll so that the White Shore would be unable to take it, but the fiasco in London had erupted first, and all Ministry soldiers were busily dealing with the backlash from the burning of the city. Most of the backlash was

centered in England, where Alexander Ceras' underground newspaper, the Underground Hope, had spurred many into taking up torches and arms against the Ministry, and the fire and flame they wielded had made the Ministry pull troops out of its bases around the world to stop the rebels from smashing up homes, businesses, and (most especially) places of high Ministry business (recruiting posts for Aurors, for example).

Committing a mistake of monumental proportions, they had declared all rebels to be "foes to the right and common cause of Wizardry" and had declared that all of them were to be put to the blade. Now outlaws whom Ministry soldiers would kill on sight, the various groups of "rioters" (who were mostly good, naturally peaceful people who suddenly found a rage in their hearts and just had to be rid of it somehow, even if it meant smashing in a window or a storefront, beating it in with their hands or fists or any piece of spare metal they could find or effected by Harry's ability to cause madness in them) found themselves forced to disappear, most of them into small hidey-holes and safe houses that Alexander Ceras (with the help of Neville Longbottom and Blaise Zabini, who had both become the official Black Tide emissary to this heavily-Tide funded army) had constructed for them, and there, they seethed, waited, and trained. Some went to a group that was only called 'Rogue'. When the time came, the Tide would let out a clarion call, to one and all, to join the great army and march to eternity together, to wipe out the Ministry once and for all, to finish this land and finish it for the Tide forever... but that time was still a ways off as of yet, and the people, for now, were merely tired, oppressed, and poor.

The Ministry grew ever more and more tyrannical as the days passed on, and some newspapers (none of them government-approved or even tolerated; several of the editors were hanged) declared Amelia Bones the "dictator of the century". A few took some openly pro-Shore or Tide opinions in their pages. They were all soon wiped out. The tales of Ministry knight atrocities (one woman, the editor of the pro-Shore Water Dreams, was raped by three supposedly honorable Ministry Mavens, their horsemen, and the story became one of Alexander Ceras' biggest selling tactics) became almost unheard of stories amongst the good Wizarding people, who, up until this point, had never had reason to doubt the veracity of their Ministry or the truth of its stories. The Ministry, though desperately propagandizing itself to the people, was fighting

a losing battle. The power of mouth-to-mouth and ear-to-ear was too much for them, and they were already losing ground.

None of this, of course, was on Ron's mind at the moment. Instead, on that night of Aug. 8th the thing most on his mind was the ability of his soldiers to stand toe-to-toe with the Ministry soldiers and win when things were sword to spear and sickle to fist. Ron hoped they could win.

He was completely surprised by the victory they won that night.

The plan was exceedingly simple. One group of warriors, those with Ron on the ship, would land at the port, where the Ministry officials would probably be quite curious as to what the devil an apparently empty ship was doing there. Whenever the men inside the ship heard someone attempt to open the door, they would rush out and take them down. Once done, Ron himself would contact a second group, led by Hermione, who was waiting inside a Thunderbird-generated storm cloud to the north, where, riding upon the Bleak Anchor commanded by Capt. Isaacs (who had been given the command of the ship by Capt. Vustag himself, who had stated that Isaacs was a better leader than he could ever possibly hope to be, and that he would be proud to serve underneath him, which had made Isaacs blush furiously and shrug embarrassedly, then make Vustag his first mate on the spot), they would proceed to fly over the encampment and hurl one or two spells at the soldiers below. They were especially aiming for captains and lieutenants, who could be picked out by the brighter clothes they wore. A group of well-placed ice spells would quickly seal off the high command, and two or three thunderbolts would guarantee that the soldiers so attacked did not survive. Afterwards, the last group of warriors, this time headed by another member of the team that had freed Walter Andrews, a small little Wizard from Spain named Pierre, would land from a second airship that was also hiding in the storm cloud, and they would charge the north while Ron and his group hacked their way through the front gates. The goal was to take the port in as best a condition as possible, one reason ice spells were being used; ice spells generally only damaged living flesh and not stone. Still, the White Shore expected some collateral damage, but that was okay. They needed this port, and even the foundations of the buildings would be a great prize, saving them much time on the reconstruction.

And, as the boat sidled up to the port, the battle began for real.

Windgleam, Ministry outpost on Lashwind Toll harbor, same time.

The harbor master, a very average man named Jonathan Tomas, was mostly bored, as he sat behind his long white desk and awaited the end of his shift. Nothing much happened up here. Oh, there had been that large shipment of troops up north a while ago (the ill-fated expedition that a certain now-dead member of the Order had cooked up; on a random note, the wolves had eaten everything but Daedulus Diggle's eyes, and they were still rolling around in the wastes somewhere, staring sightlessly at the white nothing that had consumed him and the troops that had went with him) but the eagerly-awaited return of their ships, complete with the new, crying, back-broken children who would be on them (former White Shore members, easily defeated by highly-trained Ministry troops; this was the lie the harbor master had been told and believed when Daedulus Diggle had sailed past him) had never materialized, and so the harbor master regretfully believed that they must have taken a different route going home- too many children on board, perhaps, to risk taking such an out-of-the-way route as this back home. Far from the mainland as they were, they never received many owls from the ministry, and had received no word of the defeat of the troops of north, long ago (relatively speaking) as it was.

Musing that no one ever visited them up here nowadays, the man berated himself for following his father's footsteps and joining the Navy. His father had been a drunk old fool, but even that had not diminished the awe he somehow inspired in Jonathan whenever he saw him in his great black Ministry officer's coat (he was a second gunnery sergeant aboard a battleship, the Deep Drake, which survived the burning of England). That awe had (in part) spurred Jonathan to become a member of the Navy as well, but unfortunately for him, his last name got him into trouble almost from the start. Nothing was said to the young man (not at the beginning of his training, anyway), but everyone knew his father was a bastard and nobody wanted him to be in a position of leadership at all. His father having been advanced under a series of old, now-discontinued laws regarding seniority in leadership positions, the Ministry Navy was determined not to make the same mistakes with Jonathan Tomas Jr. Deciding that a position in the far north would be best, they stuck him as close to Greenland and Russia as possible, and here he had stayed, five years having passed since he

started work as a seaman and eventually became a Harbor Master for this small place of frost near the middle of nowhere.

The Ministry had rather hated promoting him even to the decidedly undesirable position of Harbor Master, but the young man was honestly good at his job- so they promoted him and hoped he didn't share his father's almost megalomaniacal tendencies when ruling over his men, or the habit of his father's of dipping a wee bit too deep in the whisky when he was alone. In his cups, the man had almost been hanged once, by soldiers who refused to take it any longer; but Jonathan Tomas Jr. was not the man his father was, and so ended up far better than the Navy could have hoped. Still, they were loathe to stick anyone with the name "Tomas" in high command, so here he stayed, leading his men on the frozen northern edge of the world.

The man, sitting at his small desk in the small harbor, was very capable for what he did; but, having had no chance to train at harder and bigger things and henceforth never having the chance to expand his mind to deal with them, he was, in the end, a rather low-ranking middle-class soldier. He was not a great general (he was okay at defending things, and- as a bonus- he did have perfect knowledge of his harbor) and he was only an average soldier- he was, really, average in every way.

He was totally unprepared for the skill he was about to face. It was like an atom bomb deciding to have a blasting match with a firecracker. The poor man was in over his head, and he didn't even know it yet.

The ship slowly sailed into harbor, and the harbor master looked up.

"Huh" he said, as he moved to open it.

Ten minutes later.

The inside of the ship was dark and very, very cramped. Soldiers and their armor are big things, and put in a small place they tend to take up a lot of room very fast. One soldier was literally sitting on the greaves of his two companions, using his long-shafted halberd to keep himself upright. When discovering this problem, Ron had come up with a genius solution; the other two soldiers, both swordsmen, would stand up suddenly, propelling their shorter companion forward

and letting him and his time-buying halberd enter the front ahead of them. The plan was simple: when the door opened, pikemen would rush out and buy everyone time to get outside the ship and get ready. Afterwards, pikemen in the lead, they would advance on the enemy harbor and keep their forces occupied while the other troops moved into position. Pikes were long weapons, and their strength was at their tip; henceforth, they possess many great disadvantages. They were horribly unwieldy in close combat, real damage could only be dealt with the very end of the weapon, and they were as heavy as lead; but they are absolutely exceptional at what they are supposed to do, and in this battle, what Ron wanted was exactly what pikes were supposed to do. Halberds and pikes, besides being excellent cavalry deterrents (no horseman really wanted to run into one of those sharp, wicked looking things when they were leveled at him, and they had been the end of many a fine horse in their time) were also good at another thing, and that thing was time.

Pikes were the greatest tool an infantry captain could hope to have when it came to buying time for his troops. No one wanted to step into the range of a pike (or halberd, depending on what they were being called at the time; Hermione, in a fit of pique over a strange inability to say "halberd" without smiling over an old sexual joke Ron had shared with her in their bed some time ago, had even called them "long axes", which had made Ron burst out into laughter that his men didn't understand and really didn't want to understand), and the very fear of stepping into the long, sweeping arc of death that a pike represented to them was enough to buy commanders time to utilize other, more effective moves. Halberds also made great companions to swords, as they allowed an experienced soldier to "tie up" an enemy's movements, constricting his range of motion by jabbing and twisting the halberd, forcing him to duck and dodge instead of striking back, and with the enemy so preoccupied, it was a simple matter for a soldier or another halberdier to run up and strike the killing blow. Few soldiers could dodge multiple weapons without taking at least a small blow, and so most simply died when such a situation came.

All these things and more were on the minds of the soldiers now sitting quietly on the ship and waiting for the harbor master to open the door and invite death on his head. Actually, that same quiet was the one thing that should have told Ron that his doubts about his men were totally unfounded. His men were totally, completely, unnervingly silent. He had only said the word "Silence" to them, and

now this. On a Ministry ship of the same size with the same number of soldiers, the men would undoubtedly be moving about, cursing and swearing when an elbow met an eye or a knee met a groin. On a Tide ship, again of same size and with the same number of soldiers, the sheer depravity and salivating, drooling evil that heavily prevailed over them all would have caused at least a few of them to laugh, or at least quietly chuckle, as they considered the flames that would shoot up and the blood they so longed to spill the instant they were off the ship. Yet the White Shore was completely, totally quiet. No one moved. It seemed no one breathed. Ron himself was afraid that he was the noisiest one on the ship, yet all he'd done was breath and quietly (so quietly the metal didn't even scrape on the scabbard) draw Lyonheart out. Ron thought about this and wondered.

The wondering, though, took the wrong turns, and Ron escaped what might really have been the central issue. The armies of most countries, including the U.S., Great Britain, and France, all believed that the best way to train a soldier is to break him first. They view it almost as they view breaking a horse: shatter a man's spirit, and then rebuild whatever's left into the machine you want it to be. That is why so many soldiers laugh at the same jokes; it is why so many soldiers all think alike. They are taught to. A man with the guts and temerity to tell his drill sergeant, when the man says "You must be a complete damn idiot" (generally for no reason; drill sergeants are taught to act tough, mean, and gritty, and assail people for the simple purpose of cowing them into submission), to fry in hell, is generally sent to the brig. Of course, for those with a defiant streak, this training works perfectly; they are cowed and do whatever they are told. But for those men and women with the incredible strength of soul to actually sign up and register for their duties, who deliberately risk their lives in the defense of something greater, this kind of training is nothing more than a shame and a slap in the face and a rude awakening, all in one. Someone with that kind of soul should be taught to obey you, yes- you are the boss, after all- but that boss should not be shown to be some weak, stupid, screaming thing that rants for no reason and attacks you because you put your shirt on wrong, or because your medals are not perfectly laser straight. Many a soldier has left boot camp with zero respect for his drill sergeant in his mind- a great deal of fear, yes, but there is no respect. Many confuse fear and respect, but only with imbeciles are the two things ever one and the same. Fear inspires hatred; respect inspires devotion.

The Black Tide, didn't have experience with military but learned of the method and thought it stupid and against their purpose. They treated their jobs as jobs and some became like family (the best example in the Black Tide are the Maruaders), as people sometimes do when working with others, and let them be themselves, including all their insane little qualities like being a psychopath, a sociopath, a pyromaniac, a cannibal (As there are in the Black Tide, mainly Necromancers), a mad scientist, a person that performs acts of bestiality, a masochist, a sadist, a schizophrenia (two-yet-one person) and/or other such things. They put fear in the hearts of their enemies and respect from their twisted, in part from having two Jesters, along with a ruling faction of monsters in human skin, living very close to them and partly because of their already innate insanity, populace. Most of their populace immediately did as the laws that were set down by their ruling faction the Ebony Flame, said. No one thought of the Tide as a ruling faction inside of it, no it was the Ebony Flame that was the ruling faction. The soldiers respected their commanding officers for their power and sometimes their personality.

On the other side of thing the White Shore, having had zero experience with any military, treated it like both a noble, sacred thing and a job all at the same time; this allowed them to keep the honor and duty they felt had to come with being a soldier, yet also allowed their men to have fun with their work and let it all hang out, too, figuratively speaking. As a job, they respected their superior officers and their wisdom; as a noble, sacred thing, they respected the act itself, and privately trained to get better, as well. Instead of degrading their men, the White Shore lifted them high; and the result was that, with a feeling both strong-rooted and deep, each soldier honestly believed that nothing but their very best would do. This, combined with Ron's extended practice hours, resulted in an army of quickly trained, powerful soldiers who obeyed every command given to them with all the willpower and might they could muster. When Ron said Silence, he might as well have told his men to turn to stone, for they moved not at all, not even to move a hand towards an itch or blink an eye that was fiercely burning from contact with the cold, dry air. Ron was surprised at this, and almost opened his mouth to say something, but held back his tongue. Any word now would simply break the silence, and Ron had to admit, they were fulfilling his command to the letter. He'd asked for silence, and boy, silence was what he got. Everyone was so quiet it was almost unnerving.

Even those nights he'd laid awake next to Hermione, insomnia claiming him (as it so often did) instead of sleep, he had never heard such deep, uneventful, perfect silence.

He would have liked to say it was peaceful, but the silence was enforced, and so seemed hard, instead of peaceful. Then a small sound- loud inside the enclosed ship- and someone began tapping at the wall.

"Hmm... a ship? What's it doing out here? And no one's on it... demons, maybe? Or perhaps it has a magic captain, piloting it when all the Wizards are asleep... huh? A door? Hey, let's see what is insi"

At that point, Ron shouted "Now"

The door flew open, Tomas went down from a blow the high-velocity wood had delivered to him when the door seemingly leapt out of its hinges, and the Shore was on the move.

They were on the coast for a full five minutes before anyone found out, and that was only because a member of the guard had happened to go take a piss.

Private Traven walked outside, the air bitter and cold against his flesh; but because of the large number of men at the bathrooms at this hour (one man had managed to smuggle in large quantities of whisky; this resulted in much merry-making by the men, and afterwards, much water-making as each overworked liver threw a portion of its workload off onto the bladder, who was understandably very angry at being used in such a foul, mistreated way but who was also, very understandably, unable to do a damn thing about it) he had been forced to endure it if he wanted to eliminate a burning need in his crotch. Unzipping his pants, the soldier let loose with a stream that he could almost have sworn reached twenty foot in length. Back turned to the docks, the wind howling in his ears, the man didn't hear a damn thing when the door was kicked down and the men flooded outside it. He likewise heard nothing as they set up a small staging area that would last until their men were all out of the boat. Ron was currently calling Hermione on a small crystal ball they'd designed that would work in the snow (one odd note: physical cold had the ability to drain magic, and long-distance communications were a pain in the ass for a military unit in a

snowstorm, because it fritzed out their communication devices- but Durmstrang had figured out ways around it, and the White Shore was grateful for their abilities now. On the opposite side of the spectrum fire didn't enhance it at all but sucked in magical energy from a room or area that it was in almost like it was oxygen) and it was not until the communication was finished and the remaining two groups were well on their way towards the port that Private Traven turned around and was greeted by a group of heavily armed white bearing soldiers bearing on him while he was zipping up his pants.

Eyes bugging out of his head, Traven ran inside screaming "White Shore! White Shore! Here! They're Here!"

The soldiers of the Ministry outpost rushed to grab their weapons before the white clad soldiers marching on them reached the front of the outpost, but the warning had been too little, too late- even as Private Traven's body fell (pierced by an arrow), the White Shore was reaching the front gates of the outpost and preparing to throw themselves into battle against the soldiers inside. The Ministry soldiers up front were cut down before they had a chance to grab their weapons; with their deaths, however, they bought time for the remainder of the Ministry troops to grasp their weapons and turn to fight. The Ministry faced their opponents, and right then, right there, the future of all Ministry and White Shore battles was decided.

When White faced Might, White won, always. However when White faced Corrupt Might it was sometimes different in the outcome.

The first Ministry troops, carrying short swords, faced their enemy. They would have charged the pole arm-carrying front line, but side by side to each spear carrier was a swordsman, and the great swords they carried looked mean. The White Shore armor, too, looked mean as each was designed to resemble an animal of some sort (something the White Shore had done as a sort of homage to the Beastkeepers, Rangers, and Druids, who had joined them; Walter and the rest of them were highly flattered by the compliment). The front line resembled a moving wall of spear carrying eagles, accompanied by tigers with swords. Each tiger-soldier carried two great swords, one in each hand. No one had a shield.

The Ministry soldiers began to get worried.

Ron, his helm made to resemble a great howling wolf, began to get worried, too.

Worried his men would turn and run. They were years younger than most of the enemy; how would they react when ordered to kill their "betters"? How would they react when it came down to a real, great, big, bad war?

His men proved to him in the next second that they would react to it by fighting. Something that made him immensely proud of all of them.

The first Ministry soldier who decided to charge was swiftly met by what seemed to him to be a whirling wall of shining blades. One of the tiger-like men had leapt out at him and struck in a strange circular pattern, his left hand sword going up while his right hand sword curved down. The blades seemed to circle the air in front of him, and for fear of being struck low if he held the shield high and high if he held the shield low, the Ministry soldier moved his shield away from his body, pushing it out towards the tiger man so that he would be forced to keep his distance from him.

A spearman to his left, unseen by him, stabbed him through the heart when he moved his shield out from his body enough to let the iron tip in. The Ministry soldier let out an "urk" coughed out blood and died. The spear retracted, and the tiger man pulled back as well.

At this point, the main White Shore army had arrived at the front gates of the compound, which were about 150 feet from the actual entrance of the military outpost. The outpost, too, had gotten its shit together and lined up outside the front gates as well.

Ron, standing behind his men, closed his eyes and activated the com link in his helm.

"MEN" he roared.

"SIR" they roared back. Good. He could hear the excitement in their voices. They wanted to fight. After all the training they'd been through, most of them couldn't wait to fight a real enemy and not just their partners in sparring matches. They wanted to kill.

Wondering if that in and of itself was a good thing considering just who they would eventually face, Ron said "BRING THEM DOWN"

"SIR" they all cried back, and the pikemen lowered their spears. The swordsmen, human faces inside mimicking the fierce snarls of the tiger helmets they wore on the outside, began to march towards the gate, and the eagle-faced spear bearers marched slightly behind them, spears slowly advancing, using the swordsmen as cover so that they would get a chance to use the incredible weight and force of their weapons without the fear of leaving themselves open to enemy attack. Ron, picking up his pace, stepped into line beside the front line, Lyonheart out and fiercely glowing.

In the snow and the wind, his men cried out in one voice.

"HO"

They charged.

In the air to the north of Lashwind Toll, inside a magically generated stormcloud, same time.

The Bleak Anchor swayed over the seas, great anchor chains drifting lightly in the wind, wicked tips glinting whenever the electricity in the thunderstorm showed itself with a flash and a crackle of lightning. Capt. Kaleb, magically enhanced sight looking towards the south, where the first group lay, raised his hand and made a signal.

"All hands, forward" First Mate Vustag shouted. He was currently standing behind Kaleb, a large and somehow sober black pirate's hat on his head and holding a slightly smaller one for his captain. Above them, flapping lightly in the breeze, the ruined sails that were the hallmark of ghost ships the world over clung hideously to the decayed mast. Vustag looked up at them, and the slight, half-seen turning of the ghosts that floated among them simultaneously thrilling and chilling him to the core. He was glad they were on his side, glad that the ghosts had chosen to help them; yet scared of them, as Life is always terrified of Death unless one lingered much too close to the other side of. Turning his head, he said "Prepare to move forth! All men, prepare for battle"

Cheers and shouts echoed throughout the massive galleon as the deck hands swung the ship's rigging about and prepared it to move. A great groan echoed in the air, possibly of wooden boards creaking as it moved but more likely (far more likely, on a ship like this) the groan of the mighty spirits aboard the vessel, and with a noise like the flapping of high sails in a fierce wind, the ship sailed forward in the air. The Thunderbird who had circled the ship to keep it covered stopped its flight and rose up higher in the air, giving out a great cry, flying forward to strike at several predetermined enemy outposts where the runes of defense shone brightest and strongest. They may not have been aiming to tear the compound down, but they had to remove the runes over it first, or they would never complete the spell Hermione had come up with over the past few days with Ron. She herself was aboard this ship, leading a group of Chills, as the rest of the Shore had started to call them, behind her. This group, which had formed inside the Shore recently, was composed of specialists in cold and frost magics. Somewhat unnervingly, they had decided to call themselves "Cold Ghosts".

Hermione turned to them, and said "Are you ready"

The self-appointed "leader" of the Cold Ghosts, a girl named Janine, smiled at Hermione. Hermione, of course, couldn't see it, from where she was at; like all the Cold Ghosts, Janine affected a large, bluish white cloth that covered her mouth, and combined with the cowl over her head, the cloth hid all of her face from sight with the exception of her eyes. Those two brown orbs sparkled at Hermione, and then Janine said "Yes, my Lady. We are ready."

Turning to the other white-robed Ghosts, Janine said "Get ready" Unknowingly contradicting herself. They were much like another group that had recently become a part of the Shore. The Stars, as they called themselves, are mind mages and Heavy hitters, they were currently lead by Bill Weasley.

They nodded to her, and then each closed their eyes and looked up into the clear night sky. Each smiling underneath their cloths, the group began to chant with a unity that was disturbing to Hermione, even as she realized the great power it granted them. Adding her own considerable magical might to theirs, Hermione began to cast the spell as well, though she used no chanting in her magic. Hermione preferred to simply say the words once, while focusing on her desired results. The two styles were contrasts; chanting created

a quantity of effects, while merely saying created a quality of effect. Because of these differences, Hermione and the Cold Ghosts were each focusing on a separate task.

Because they were producing a much wider (though weaker) string of effects in their spell, the Cold Ghosts were focusing on the base as a whole; Hermione was focusing on only a few separate sections of the base, but, because her spell was being said versus chanted, she was producing a greater, though narrower, effect on the sections she chose. The result was that the Cold Ghosts ended up totally freezing all inanimate objects in the areas of the base they attacked, and partially chilling any animate objects as well, and they also managed to partially drain the magic out of most objects in the areas they chose. Hermione totally froze all inanimate objects and animate objects as well, though any magic in the rooms she attacked was left unaffected by her spell. Combining these two powers, they accomplished their goal.

The inside of the base was now a frosty hell, and the unarmored soldiers inside (who didn't wear armor when not on duty, since it was heavy and the Ministry army had not, until recently, had any enemies in this area) would soon be struck down with hypothermia and die. Also, the partial drain of magic prevented the automatic heaters from kicking on, henceforth ruling out that a sudden wave of heat would pass through the rooms and save the lives of the soldiers inside. It was a cruel, sneaky trick, but it was a stroke of pure tactical genius, and the move had probably saved the lives of countless White Shore soldiers, who would otherwise have been forced to fight room-by-room, dealing with an enemy who not only had intimate knowledge of the base and its design, but also had the advantage of being able to lie in wait and let the enemy come towards them. Now, the Ministry had no choice but to fight, and fight hard, hoping to solve the problem of the cold as soon as they had dealt with the enemy army on their doorsteps. Hermione and her soldiers had done what they were supposed to; now, they were to fly over the front gates and see if they could kill any Ministry officers from above. Air attacks being what they were, Ron had hoped to cause much confusion and terror among the ranks when it seemed as if the sky itself was against them. Huge chunks of ice were to be formed in the air, and then dropped upon the enemy, causing the death of anyone beneath them.

Hermione, thinking to herself as the ship wheeled around to approach the front gates over the now-defunct runes, hoped that they didn't miss. Nothing would hurt her more than to know that she, even by accident, had managed to hurt one of the soldiers who so fervently believed in her. Remembering that she was supposed to send a signal to Pierre aboard the Grand Star, she waved her hand at a nearby attendant, and then held up one, two, and finally three fingers, closing her hand fully each time. He nodded and ran off, a magical light in his hands, towards the back of the ship, where he would shine it at the Grand Star in a series of one, two, and then three flashes, with a one second pause between them.

At the front of the ship, Capt. Kaleb waited for battle.

To the north of Lashwind Toll, in the same airspace where the Bleak Anchor had been, a minute later.

Aboard the airship Grand Star, which had been renamed when the White Shore had based itself at Durmstrang (it's former name had been Onager, an old Roman word for "wild ass", also the same word they used for "catapult"), Pierre rubbed his head and looked anxiously at the Bleak Anchor. When Hermione and the Cold Ghosts had finished their spell, they were to flash a signal to them. The signal given would depend on the situation: one flash with no follow-up indicated that the mission was a failure and that they were to run home as fast as they could; one flash, followed by two one second later, would indicate that they were to proceed, but cautiously; one, followed by two, then followed by three, meant everything was a blazing success and that they should proceed with all haste. He waited anxiously for the moment to come; a jumpy man by nature, war was eating up his nerves. Observing him later, one soldier told Ron that Pierre "always looked as though something large and nasty was about to come out and beat him down." It was just about the truth.

Despite his nervousness, however, Pierre was a good man and an able soldier; in the middle of battle, he seemed to be an absolutely impregnable man, not noticing wounds, disasters, or even the closest of calls, taking them all as calmly as another man might take his tea. It was before he did things that he started spazzing out. Waiting had never sat well with him, he was a make it happen now sort of person. Standing beside him, Capt. Olaf Ahnren looked over at the young man with kindness, then said "Hey Pierre."

Pierre's head snapped over, and he said "Yeah"

Olaf smiled through his thick yellow beard. "It's okay" he said. "You'll be all right. Just wait for the battle and tell yourself it will all be okay." Olaf's smile and genial manner seemed to tell everyone around him that everything would be okay. Jimmy Peakes not far from them just shook his head knowing that it wouldn't work his long black ponytail moving with him. He was currently in green armor that matched his organization perfectly. He just put on his helmet and let Olaf take care of it. Olaf was a tall, thin man and he was a very kind sort of soul. Pierre's jumpiness was not, however, impressed by his manner.

"I know" Pierre said, twitching, looking about, and seeming for the entire world as if he did not know. "It's just... I don't like waiting."

Olaf smiled. "Yeah" he said "tell me about it. Still, nothing else we can do, so let's just... hey, was that a light" Jimmy massaged his temples and nodded his head. Olaf was a good man, a better captain but not the most observant of people.

Pierre's head whipped around, and he caught just a brief glance of the signal before it flashed out of view. An eternal second later, two more flashes followed. Pierre was about to yell for joy when another set of flashes, this time three in a row, blinked on and off in the cold summer night before going out permanently and leaving the rear end of the Bleak Anchor in darkness. Pierre smiled. His nervousness seemed to fall off of him like water down the back of a tall stone building. Turning his small, slender body around, Pierre said "All right, then. You saw it. Let's get moving."

As Olaf shouted out commands to his crew, Pierre said "Finally! Let's get ready, people." Putting on the face of a bear, Pierre picked up the slender rapier he chose to fight with. "Let's make some dead."

Jimmy said "Bought time you started acting right. This is the guy I know. Let kick some ministry arse. Give the bodies of their soldiers to them just to make a statement." His cold blue eyes brought out his statement. He looked like the serpent that he had killed. His armor was made out of its hide after all. He put his sword on his shoulder.

Pierre replied "Of course, when I enter battle I become someone else. Let them bury dead on their land for they won't be welcome here."

The cheers of his men rang in his ears as the Grand Star began its flight towards Lashwind Toll.

Inside the sleeping quarters of the Ministry outpost on Lashwind Toll, same time.

The soldiers getting up felt something was wrong in the air the instant they began to move. Hearing only half-understood shouts in their ears, the groggy watchmen stumbled up out of their wool covers and began to ask what was going on... before feeling it hit them with an almost physical smack.

The air. Something was wrong with the air. As each man tried to figure out for himself what was wrong with the world around them, their toes and fingers began to turn blue from the cold. And as each man looked at his hands and feet, every one of them figured it out, almost at the same time.

The air. The air was cold.

And the Ministry always kept the temperature at something like seventy five degrees Fahrenheit. What was...?

What was going on...?

The men stumbled out of bed, and the first thing their feet felt was the sheer, almost impossible cold of the floor. It was the absolute last thing they would ever feel out of their feet if they were stupid, ever again. The smart ones cast warming charms on themselves.

Front gates of Lashwind Toll, same time.

The Ministry soldiers held up the swords they wielded and vainly tried again, but it was no good. Something was wrong with the world here. Somehow, nothing they did seemed to affect the army of beast men that even now began to advance again, slowly and slowly pushing them back against the compound, cutting swathes and swathes of their ranks down with each advance, beating them back every time they rushed forward to retake their land and drive the

invaders out. The tigers stopped them from getting to the eagles as the eagles took out the ones that had the misfortune of getting in their way. They could distantly see men with hawk helmets firing arrows into their ranks. They seemed to be invincible, and as the Ministry soldiers looked about the battlefield, they could almost admire their enemy for the incredible skill they displayed in combat, and would, if the enemy had not been using it on them. A tiger man, blades out, performed a whirling dance, one blade catching his opponent's sword and knocking it aside, his other blade whipping through the air as he turned to bury itself deeply in the man's head. One brave Ministry soldier, armed with an axe, rushed forward, but two stepped up to meet him, and when he drew his axe over his head to strike, one put its twin blades into his neck and the second stabbed him in the stomach. He dropped his weapon and died gurgling. An eagle woman, spear in hand, walked forth, and when two soldiers rushed her, she made her long pole a tripwire, sweeping it low and knocking them off their feet, finally raising her weapon up in the air and bringing it down with crushing force. Both men died with their faces gone. A particularly ferocious enemy, bearing the visage of a raging wolf, walked forward, a strangely shining sword in hand, and with one blow he was cleaving apart even the strongest of protective magics with the razor edge of his sword. Three men had tried to bring him down. All three died before they could make a single move. One with an arrow through the head, another with a spear through his heart and the last was cleaved in half.

The men fell back and fell back, and soon they felt the chill walls of their compound behind them (very chill; none of the men noticed it at the time, but their compound felt absolutely frigid at their backs). Prepared to make a stand right there and then, they readied their weapons to meet the charge.

The chunks of boulder-like ice that fell on them from above busted open their skulls and cut them down where they stood. Men screamed as chunks rained down on them, huge blocks of sheer ice that seemed to move the earth when they hit. Each impact was like a meteor, crushing flesh and breaking bone, killing groups of men at each go. Worse, the sound of a great, bellowing war cry behind them (completely unlike the totally silent, almost statue like beast men and women before them and yet, somehow, horribly, exactly the same) made them fear in their hearts, and tremble in their shoes.

Finally, feeling the end was near, they made a run for it.

None of them escaped.

Durmstrang, four days later, Aug. 12, 3:00 p.m.

The cold roof of the world was alight with excitement that day, as the first shipment of soldiers to the newly created port of Bear's Claw (named after the great bears the White Shore was using as load bearers- no one would use the term "beast of burden") was heading off that day. Waving goodbye to the valiant soldiers who were onboard the Frost Cap (a new ship Kaleb had recently stolen, in his second raid, this time from a Ministry naval base in the eastern part of Ireland- Kaleb was starting to enjoy stealing from his enemies, and privately relived every moment of his two captures in his dreams), Ron viewed their departure with a mixture of fear and exhilaration. His men had fought well- extremely well. He had been surprised at the tenacity with which they fought, and the fact that they had lost only ten men- only ten- against a force that was of nearly equal size. They had been very fortunate that their ice chunks didn't kill any of their men, though there were a lot of close calls, so they learned from it and had Ron mark were they would have them land next time. All of them had been killed when the Ministry soldiers had "snapped" under the strain of having icebergs dropped upon their heads and rushed pell-mell at them, swords swinging. Such berserker fighting tactics were hard to deal with. Still, with only ten losses, Ron's head was swimming. He'd had no idea that his men could fight so well. He'd bought them all a round of the rare Firewhisky that Durmstrang had kept in its basement over the years (and had brought out when the White Shore arrived, selling to souls underage in body but overage in mind, for prices that were very, very inflated).

One of the more popular jokes running around nowadays was that, while Ron may be "Old Grim", he sure as hell wasn't "Old Stingy". His men often waved at him when they saw him passing in the halls, feeling very friendly towards him after the last battle. Surprising himself, Ron often waved back. Things were going too well to be depressed anymore. He didn't go so far as to begin stargazing with the rest of the White Shore, but he was considerably happier than he had been in a long, long time. Standing on one of the freezing outer balconies of Durmstrang's School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, Ron shivered in the cold and smiled. Things weren't so bad after all.

He looked at Hermione, standing beside him, and once more surprised himself, wrapping his arm around her and hugging her close. Hermione, shocked at this unusual display of love and affection, looked confused for a moment, then looked up into his eyes and smiled. Turning her head, she snuggled up to him, and sighed happily.

"Hermione" Ron said, holding her. He played with a strand of her hair. White and brown curls mingled in his hand.

"Yes, Ron" Hermione said, leaning against him as the Frost Cap disappeared in the distance. She would remember it later as one of the happiest moments of her life.

"I love you" he said. Hermione sighed against him.

"And I you" she said. Later that night, she lay in his arms and wondered what he was dreaming, as he slept beside her. It was something she would wonder often, in coming nights.

Ron's insomnia had disappeared, for now.

Bountries on the Black Tide

Harry Potter (600 Thousand Galleon Dead from Ministry. 300 thousand Galleon Dead from Voldemort) "The Jester King" or "The Jester of Madness" King of the Ebony Flame

Seamus Finnigan (160 Thousand Galleons Alive/Dead, Ministry. 175 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 100-Thousand Dead, Voldemort) "The Black General" Part of the Ebony Flame

Ginny Weasley (150 Thousand Galleons Dead, Ministry. 175 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 100-Thousand Dead, Voldemort) "Lady of the Dead" or "The Black Lady" Part of the Ebony Flame

Blaise Zabini (150 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 120-Thousand Dead, Ministry. 195 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 100-Thousand Dead, Voldemort) "The Jester of Pain" Queen of the Ebony Flame

Neville Longbottom (150 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 120-Thousand Dead) "Master of Water" Part of the Ebony Flame

Padma Parvati (150 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 120-Thousand Dead)
"Queen of Earth" Part of the Ebony Flame

Draco Malfoy (145 Thousand Galleons Alive/Dead, Ministry. 150
Thousand Galleons Alive/100-Thousand Dead, Voldemort.) "King of
Beasts" Part of the Ebony Flame

Luna Lovegood (145 Thousand Galleons Alive/Dead) "Lady of
Destruction" Part of the Ebony Flame

Terry Boot (145 Thousand Galleons Alive/Dead, Ministry. 175
Thousand Galleons Alive/ 100-Thousand Dead, Voldemort) "Lord of
Hellfire" Part of the Ebony Flame

Samual (145 Thousand Galleons Dead) "Lord of Misfits" Part of the
Ebony Flame

Cho Chang (145 Thousand Galleons Alive/Dead) "Lady of
Monstrosity" Part of the Ebony Flame

Fleur Delacour (140 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 120-Thousand Dead)
"The Metal Winged Lady"

Wedge (130 Thousand Alive/ 110 Thousand dead) apprenticed
under Terry Boot. NKN

Richard Spithe (130 Thousand Alive/ 110 Thousand dead)
"Secondary General"

Alex Vicks (130 Thousand Alive/ 110 Thousand dead) "Secondary
General"

Victoria Heavenwalker (140 thousand dead) "the Heart Striker"

Current bounties on the White Shore

Hermione Granger (200 Thousand Galleons Dead) "the Snow Lady"

Ron Weasley (175 Thousand Galleons Dead) "Old Grim"

Walter Andrews (160 Thousand Galleons Dead) "Beast master"

Kaleb Isaacs (150 Thousand Alive/Dead) "Robin Hood"

Jimmy Peakes (150 Thousand Alive/Dead) "Serpent Slayer"

Current organizations in Black Tide.

Marauders are the basic soldier and terror squad. Their leader is Seamus who only takes orders from Harry or Blaise depending on the situation. His second in command is Vick and Spithe.

Purgers are those with Skull-masters. Their leader is Terry Boot who helps make the Skull-masters and is part of the Enchanters Guild. Terry follows Harry and then Seamus' orders.

Necromancers are those that raised the dead. It was controlled by Ginny. She took orders only from Harry and requests from Seamus.

Elementalist is those that control the elements. Some Purgers are part of the Fire Elementalists but instead of staffs they use their Skull-masters as ways to cast spells. All of the Eclipse is in some part of it. Some Krakens are part of it but not many. Neville is the commander of the Elementalist. He takes orders from Harry and sometimes Seamus. He also learned military strategy, from muggles, so to better command them in battle.

Enchanters are those that make the weapons. Some battle with other groups but most don't. Leader is Cho Chang. They follow Harry's orders.

The Eclipse is the demolition experts. Their leader is Luna who follows Harry's orders then Seamus'. She is also part of the more destructive side of the Enchanters Guild. practice

The Kraken is the beast tamers organization. Their leader is Draco who follows Harry's orders then Seamus'.

The Sword fish are the assassins. Their leader is Blaise then Daphne. Both of who only take orders from Harry.

The Great White is the interrogation, slavery, and torture organization and is composed mainly of fear-casters. Their leader is Blaise and then Tracey. Both only take orders from Harry.

Chimera is living experiments that are used in battle. Whipstitch is the official leader but is commanded by Cho Chang so she is in command of this unit. She takes orders from Harry and then Seamus.

Barbarians are those that use their rage to power their magic. They use their magic to surpass the human limit and some even get greatly angered and more powerful by pain. They are the opposite of the Monks who seek inner peace. They are lead by, formerly Nymphadora Tonks, now Dora Tonks and Fleur Delacour. They take orders from Harry and Seamus.

Misfits are creatures that have joined Harry, to find haven and take vengeance on the wizarding world that suppressed them. They ranged from werewolves, to vampires, to giants, to veela, to just about every other intelligent creature. Their leader is called Samual and is a vampire. They take orders from Seamus and Harry.

Current White Shore organization

Crabs (paladins) are those that serve the light. They are stubborn and unmoving. Their leader is Ron. He takes orders from Hermione

Animals (beast tamers) they are those that bond with Beasts, and are angry at the Kraken for enslaving the beast of nature. They have bonds with the beast of natures so far that their own bodies change to look like them. They are lead by Walter Andrews who is supported by Charlie Weasley who is a new member. He takes orders from Hermione and Ron.

Plants (druids) they are those that control nature itself. They are angry at Harry for destroying the Forbidden forest. They are lead by Patil Parvati. She takes orders from Ron and Hermione.

Sands (warriors) are the basic soldiers. They have the greatest amount among them as well as some of their best soldiers. They are lead by Kaleb Isaacs. He takes orders from Ron and Hermione.

Fire (clerics) they are the healers and help improve battling conditions. They are lead by Hermione who in turn leads everyone in the White Shore.

Calm (monks) are those that have used their magic to give their bodies supernatural limits. They are the more melee fighter and work with the Warriors often. They seek an inner peace. Their leader is George. He takes orders from Hermione and Ron.

Enchanters are those that make the weapons of the White shore. They are powerful and involved with all of the groups. They are lead by Percy Weasley. They take orders from Hermione.

Trees (rangers) they are those that are like the druids in that they live in nature. They are some of the more survivalist of the White Shore. They are lead by Jimmy Peakes. He is descended from Glanmore Peakes who was slayer a powerful Great sea serpent as he himself has. He takes orders from Hermione and Ron

Silver out.

Madness 19

As a general rule, that autumn and winter were very bad for the Tide. Starting in the late summer, things began to go bad for them, and by the end of winter they were lucky to be alive- everyone had been attacked, it seemed, and only the efforts of some of the greatest of their kind had kept them afloat. One of these dark heroes was actually a group of them. The Fifteenth Marauder Division and Third Hell-Burner Division who used to be the Thirteenth Purger Division, which together after today would become known as "Hell's Kings", performed an act that seemed small to many of their enemies at the time but may have been one of the biggest effectors of the war. The act was to steal all the supplies within the port of Sailing Storm and then destroy the port itself and all in it.

It would have been a very, very tiny act... except for three things.

After all, you can't call griffin eggs tiny, nor can call a pregnant red dragon and its mate that either.

Sailing Storm, Ministry naval outpost, near London, England, 3:00 p.m., Aug. 12.

The men sailing into the port were nervous, jumpy, and ill-suited to water life- both had puked their brains out several times over since setting sail from Denmark some time ago. However, now that they were at port, they were even more nervous- after all, they had some ridiculously illegal cargo to import, and if caught, they would probably be executed. The Ministry had gotten much harsher over the past few days, and crimes that before would have merited nothing more than a slap on the wrist now received jail time, and, in some instances, death. The fifteen men on the ship were delivering cargo that, pre-War, would have gotten them jailed- now, the penalty for bringing in Dangerous Animals to the country was execution, swift and simple.

The Ministry had gotten scared over the past few days that the Beastkeepers would sneak into the country with the eggs of their animals with them and grow them in the countryside, sending them to rage and rampage whenever the creatures grew old enough to kill, and this idea, fanned in the heads of the Wizengamot by a particularly weighty spokesman (actually the representative of Coyote, Pettan Grew, otherwise known as Peter Pettigrew,

everyone's favorite evil Animagus in a new disguise, working on a suggestion by Voldemort that actually was a good idea- assuming, of course, that the Beastkeepers or Kraken would have done such a thing in the first place), soon became one of the many portions of the law about which the Ministry was particularly strict. In fact, the creatures the smugglers were escorting- twenty-nine golden griffin eggs, all in prime condition, all ready to birth within another month or so- were considered the third-most dangerous creatures on the Dangerous Animals list, behind red dragons (number 1 threat) and Thunderbirds (number 2 threat). Capture with these babies in their possession would be a sure-fire way of getting killed, in extremely painful ways. It would be better for them if they just killed themselves then get captured. When the Ministry officials, displaying ordinary Ministry inefficiency, forgoes checking their cargo hold for more than a quick look that all the crates they said were there were there and that none they said were not were there, the fifteen smugglers breathed a collective sigh of relief. Glad to have gotten through so far, the smugglers began to unload their cargo upon a waiting, friendly black marketer, who would pay them in gold Galleons and then fly the crates with their precious cargo to a certain woman whose name the smugglers did not know.

(Unbeknownst to them- or anyone else, for that matter- the crates were being sent to Mrs. Tonks, now a widower and thought that her child was dead and that the Tide had killed her husband, who had ordered them in a strange fit of liveliness that interrupted the dead, almost stale lethargy that had settled over her upon hearing of her husband's death. That death was, of course, one hell of a long time ago, and now, her funds dwindling, she had seemed almost to wake up and had settled on a most novel- if strange- attempt at life. She was going to attempt to become a Beastkeeper. She wanted to prove- for some odd reason only she herself knew about- that Beastkeepers were not inherently bad people. Perhaps the fact that many neighbors believed she'd lost her mind from the twin deaths of her daughter and her husband, but Mrs. Tonks was now obsessed with counter-cultures and alternate lifestyles, and the Beastkeepers fascinated her, much like her nephew Draco. She'd also had the eggs of giant Dulphiny land crabs sent to her house, as well as one egg- only one, the damn things were too powerful to have more than one- of a mighty creature known only as a Samphiron, a great frilled creature that was said to resemble an ancient creature called an ankylosaurus, with a body that was said to weigh over four tons that had eight legs to move its cantankerous bulk about, plus a set of

four tails which- legends said- had the power to draw in the ambient light of the Samphiron's surroundings and turn the entire surrounding area dark. She never received the shipment of griffon eggs, but was soon too busy dealing with her three Dulphiny land crabs and one Samphiron to worry about it too much. Because of her own insanity and her exile from the Black family that the Tide let her live.)

As the smugglers found the black marketer, greeting him with a wink and a nudge, they suddenly heard a high, ululating war cry. Jerking their heads up, they saw, just in time, five Marauders barreling towards them. Not really caring if Mrs. Tonks would pay for damaged goods or not, they threw the crates down and proceeded to haul ass. Only the black marketeer made it very far- he got exactly fifteen feet before the same archer who had slain three of the smugglers struck him down. The five Marauders, finished with firing their arrows, put their bows back on their backs and drew their swords. They ran through the small port, slaying anyone they came across, and leaving the bodies where they lay in the streets. The Fifteenth, comprised of only 70 men of the original 100 (the Tide being what it was, the divisions were simple- round numbers, as Seamus himself once said, were lovely things, and made the math so much easier), charged, with the Third division, made up of exactly 12 men, Hell-Burners as support, into the city of three hundred with but one purpose.

Kill everything that moved, and leave the bodies to the birds or the flames.

The archers, half of the total number of Marauders, marched on, firing as they came upon their targets and laughing as they flung death-filled sacs into open windows or poured small tubes of a thick, viscous green material down the throats of already dead corpses. In exactly three hours, the sacs would burst and the liquid would burn- and Hell's Boils would infect the entire area. The Third division made sure to avoid those bodies or houses so that they didn't burst early burn such expensive items.

The Hell's Kings marched on. Behind them, perfectly safe in their snug little nest of hay and soil, were twenty-nine golden griffin eggs. They gleamed slightly in the light.

The Hell's Kings suffered not one casualty that day, though came close to because of the enraged dragons that were nesting near the exit of town, as the attack was sudden, swift, well-organized, and completely unexpected. The Hell's Kings had assaulted a city comprised almost entirely of civilians, and when the Marauders and Hell-Burners were done, over one hundred and twenty civilians lay dead. When the Boils infected the area later, the rest of them died more painful deaths later.

The Hell's Kings had not intended, however, to actually kill everyone in the town. They had intended merely to frighten them and shock them, and then they intended to use the pack spiders they had brought along to carry out the goods of the small port. Amongst the usual trade of food, clothing, and whiskey (which was great for them; the Laughing Mug, which now had stores in all eleven cities of the Tide, had been running low on whiskey up here in England, what with tighter port security and all), the group found some banned items as well- flying carpets, Fondest Dreams (a strange, slightly eerie device that was essentially an automatic sex robot that could assume any form, shape, or... size that anyone wanted it to be), and, most importantly, the griffin eggs. Shrugging at their good luck at finding flying carpets, the Tide soldiers had pitched the Fondest Dreams, stuck the eggs on the carpets on the off-chance it could be useful as a meal item, and had ten men fly off with them back to Oceania while the rest hoofed it all the way with the rest of the load on pack-spiders. They also saw the dragons on their way out and thought them to be a well placed gift for their king and army. They stunned them and had the few extra spiders that they were going to use for those that needed rest but thought these dragons were more important.

When the men on foot reached Oceania two hours after their comrades, they received a hero's welcome.

The Barracks, Oceania, England, two hours later.

Seamus merely stared at the men as the two Enchanters from Cho's Nightworks (as she had taken to calling the massive blacksmithy, crafting, and enchanting facility that had been the first building built in Oceania and now was the second largest, only behind the Keep itself in size) looked the eggs over, and then asked if they could take them back. Allowing them to do so with a wave of his hand, Seamus turned to his men and felt, for the first time, an utter blank.

Wondering just what his men had been doing, he asked as the Enchanters left "Alright, men. I'll get to the point. Why and what did you do?" He looked out the window of the room they were in at the two massive Dragons that the spiders were now towing to the Dome building that their mother birthed them from before looking to his men's commander. He saw the rune slave marks now on the two dragons as well.

One of them, their commander named Albus Arain, said "Sir, we did it because of revenge. We suffered, sir, in the battle for London..."

Seamus turned his head. They'd all suffered, in the fight for London. It may have only been surface wounds, but in an army where only the merest of scratches had been all, the enemy could give for a long time, surface wounds cut deep. "I know. Go on."

A second commander, Balkus Deraï, said "Sir, with all due respect, I don't think you do know. You do understand which Division we are, right"

Seamus, not angry with the man (he knew full well which Division this was, dreams of its dead men having tortured him for a week after the events of London), said "Yes, I know, Balkus. I know which Division you are." Seamus sighed. "You were the ones who stayed behind." Terry slightly behind him looked at his Hell-Burners but they shook their heads and looked at the captain of the Fifteenth Division who they knew was going to speak next.

The only captain of the Fifteenth division, Cassalin Gomal, spoke up. "Sir" she said "we were caught on the other side of the bridge when the bombs were detonated. You know that. Don't make us heroes when we were fools."

"Cassalin..." Seamus began, only to be cut off by Albus Arain when he spoke again. Normally, no soldier would dare interrupt the Black General for any reason, but Albus was suddenly filled with a passion he could not control. It was a passion that would make him a great leader in days to come.

"No, sir," he spit, almost hissing at the air "don't comfort us. Damn it, we know what we did. We all do! We three are the reason so many of us are dead. Thirty men, sir. Thirty men. That's almost third of our force. That's... that's too many to know, too many to understand.

We... we are not big groups, you know that. We Marauders are small, close-knit families, damn it, families you designed and created! We became a family because our purpose in combat is not just front-line soldiers, where only the strength of your brother's arm might be all that keeps you alive... but because we are also special attack squads, commandos in enemy territory, and there, we have to have an absolute faith in each other. An absolute trust. It's a bond that goes deeper than blood, deeper than loyalty, deeper than honor. We love each other. Every single one of us, we had too to survive."

Overcome for a moment, Albus actually began to cry. Before anyone else, the fierce Englishman would have pushed them back and fought himself over the tears, but General Seamus was such a great man and a noble one that he felt no shame in his tears before him. Seamus never knew it, but he was a makeshift father for a lot of them, and oddly, the same lack of compassion his own father had had was what gave Seamus such an over-abundance of it. To the orphans of the Tide (and all of them were orphans in some way or the other; even by choice, being an orphan is hard), Seamus and his stern, commanding visage was not just the "boss" or the "commander"; he was also their friend, and someone they could look up to, to become like was most their goals. Slightly uncomfortable in the face of the man's tears, Seamus said nothing, merely looked away in a gesture that spoke not of shame or disgust but of mere understanding... which prompted Cassalin to speak.

"Sir" she said "we were... closer-knit, than most of the Tide. We always had been. We knew every little detail of each other's lives and reveled in every minute of it. We were together through everything- everything. We're one of the oldest groups in the Tide, formed right after Hogwarts shut down. We were with each other in the battle of Hogwarts, fighting outside the walls... we lost nobody there, and that was because we stood together. Balkus himself rescued me when a rogue centaur that had gotten past Padma's line of stone spires ran into me and knocked me down. Right before he struck me with his axe, Balkus grabbed me and jerked me out of the way in time for the centaur to miss. Right after he struck, four arrows found his head. Four arrows! All because I was in danger, everyone else in the division ran to my aid. They paid for my whiskey that night because I had almost gotten killed. We were a family, damn it, and the Ministry tore us apart." She spat this last and then, like Albus, broke down into tears.

Balkus put his hands on his friend's shoulders and patted them gently. Albus and Cassalin both turned to the bigger man and wept into his shoulders. Holding both of them, Balkus said "We've danced in hell together. We're all damned, we know that. We've watched Necromancers fly overhead and hurl death-magicks with their hands, we've seen men turn into crocodiles and bite the heads off of others, we've even seen men literally explode as a Purger's flames ate them up. But we have never seen one of our family die. And now we have. Thirty of them, all in one go."

"I dream about it sometimes" Albus whispered, shaking as he remembered. "The Maven galloping towards us, those giant sickles in their hands, like death had had a sale on old blades and they'd purchased all his used, rusty, blood-stained old tools..."

"We are the last three of the eight commanders that had led Division Fifteen" Balkus said. "We eight had decided, when you gave the order to retreat to the bridge, to stay on the other side and slow the knights down. We believed that it would be easy- we heard the reports from you that things had gone to hell, and when we reached the bridge- ahead of everyone else, damn it, that's what kills me the most, we were there first and we didn't cross damn it all! We waited and saw the horrified looks of our fellow soldiers as they flew from death on their white steeds behind them and ran pell-mell for the bridge... I even remember those Purgers, the ones that finally detonated the bridges, standing there, in the middle of the bridges, like a splash of bright red color on a black canvas as the army swarmed around them. I remember one looking at me, and I saw him mouth Go." He looked at Adren Smith, the Commander of the Third Division Hell-Burners, as he looked down in shame that he hadn't gotten them to come with him even though he tried, "But we didn't. You know why? We were arrogant. We thought we could slay the Maven. We thought we could fight the Ministry, kill their commanders, and head back to the meadow, singing "A Fiery Breeze" as loud as we could, swaggering as we came back victorious." Balkus closed his eyes and shuddered. "But we never had a single chance."

Seamus, who remembered that terrible day all too well, said "What happened?" He knew perfectly well what happened, but speaking about the past- flaying yourself with the whip of painful memories- was sometimes the best thing that could happen to you.

"They slaughtered us" Balkus said flatly, as Cassalin finished crying and drew back, slightly abashed, while Albus' sobs slowly died down "They charged in and cut us down. Maven move fast, sir. I know our spiders are more mobile, but the horses the Ministry ride are swifter than the wind. They charged in, leapt our clumsy attacks, and began cutting us before we even knew what hit us. Leland and Ziegfried went down in the first volley- that was our two top commanders right there. After that..." He slowly shook his head. "I don't remember, really. It's all just a blur until I suddenly come to, standing in the meadow, whispering "For vengeance" to myself. The Third Division became a part of our family, sir. They tried to get us to the other side, sir, tried to warn us what their bombs would do." He shook as he tried to stop his tears as they slowly came down his face "We still don't have as many men as the rest of the Tide, sir. We lost half of our forces- remember, back then, sixty was the number allotted to a division. You've raised it to one hundred, but you still have never replaced the thirty we lost. We have eighty two now but we will always have eighteen less. We took in those that had been massacred in the first charge because they were like us."

"I thought" Seamus said, pursing his lips "that you three specifically asked that I not replace those lost men."

"We did" Balkus said. "I'm not blaming you, sir, or saying anything about you- that's our call, our fault, if fault is to be found. But ever since then, we've had it in our heads to get revenge. We've trained, day and night, using the Barracks' training grounds for days on end, never leaving, hardly sleeping, eating only the meagerest rations as we fought and fought and fought. We've battled for hours on end, sir, to the point where whole stretches of days are just a haze of combat in my mind, days where all I did was train and fight, train and fight." He shook his head. "You remember when the centaur ruler named Ashbow was killed"

"Yes" Seamus said. A week ago, the final group of centaurs had been eliminated. They'd held out 'till the very end, and even Harry had been somewhat impressed by their tenacity- but in the end, a strange, sudden attack by the Fifteenth Marauder Division had slew the last remaining centaur encampment in its hidden valley while the centaurs slept. Seamus had been mildly pleased with the soldier's work and had given the small bounty they'd placed on Ashbow's head- a bounty of one hundred Galleons, not much, but a nice bonus that could pay for a weekend of drinking if the user spent his

money right- to Balkus at that time, to distribute amongst his men. From what he'd heard, they'd used it to pay for extra supplies and weaponry, particularly small bags of Hell's Boil, formed into a powder that activated magically and spread the disease about. Such sales were both expensive and highly monitored, and the Tide kept a strict record of who had how many bags of the stuff- only thirty had ever been made- but Seamus had authorized the Fifteenth to buy a few bags of the stuff, along with a few of the less-deadly, weaker vials that carried liquid versions of the stuff that were valid only for a short while before the disease in them died. Seamus, thinking of this, now wondered just what they had done in Sailing Storm.

"We did that for the money" Albus said, as he finally gained control of his emotions and stood up, dabbing at his eyes. "We did it so we could buy the bags of Hell's Boils dust. We poisoned the port of Sailing Storm to kill all the inhabitants. It's a major port for smugglers of illegal goods, sir. Most importantly" and here Balkus smiled grimly and it showed that it was filled with malice and ill intent "it's the home of Siegfried Leehalt's only daughter, and only child."

Seamus merely blinked, not comprehending the information for a minute. Understanding hitting him, he said "What?" His voice was small, and choked. If anyone else had seen him, they would have seen a man mildly shocked and stunned; if the other members, as Terry himself had only seen it a few times before, of the Ebony Flame had seen him, though, they would have known differently. This was the look Seamus got when he heard news he liked. Terry smiled at Seamus' reaction.

News he liked a great deal.

"The daughter of the colonel" Albus said, spitting the words out through clenched teeth as he hunched over and smiled, still shaking from his tears but now smiling through them "who led the army that attacked us in London. The daughter of the bastard who owes us the lives of every man we lost." He opened his eyes and looked up at Seamus. "The bitch is dead, sir. Or, to be correct, dying. We poured a vial down her throat and make her breathe in almost a full bag of dust. She's dying, sir. Dying most painfully."

A huge smile lit Seamus' face. Grinning like a jester and mad as a hatter, Seamus said "My friends, I believe that we have reached an understanding. You have found a wonderful, almost kingly use for

Hell's Boils..." The entire two divisions were shocked that he wasn't remanding them. Terry almost laughed at the sight of them.

At that moment, Ginny knocked on the door to the room they were in. She was almost immediately trampled by a runner from the Nightworks, who, upon seeing who it was he had bumped into, blanched and fell backwards, bowing and muttering repeatedly, backing up the whole while. Ginny, who had not been hurt and was merely mildly amused, waved her hand and turned as Seamus opened the door.

"I don't think" he said, then noticed who it was. "Oh, hello, Ginny. I'm dealing with a few soldiers here... step in, if you want." Seamus then noticed the runner. "Who's that"

"Don't know" Ginny said, stepping in lightly. "He just bumped into me."

"The eggs" the runner choked out, remembering his message through a haze of fear. "They're... they're..."

"What, soldier, what" Seamus said. "What are they?"

"They're..." the soldier gasped for air, then shouted out "They're griffin eggs, sir"

As one, Seamus and Ginny's eyes opened with shock, and then, an idea forming in their minds, looked at each other and smiled.

Jester's Keep, Oceania, Nov. 5, 11:00 p.m., near the end of the First Year of the War of the Long Twilight

There are few things that truly, truly impress/disturb the residents of Oceania and Lunas. Having watched, from their comfortable position, the building of an entire dark utopia from the middle of the world by a man who was once a hero but was now a villain, a great villain, a villain to end all villains; the villain king, the villain master, leader, and king, there is not much they have not seen. Vampires can be found wandering in Oceania; Ogres, Giants, and the like can sometimes be seen wandering about and exploring the shops of this rare and unusual place. (Even in the future Harry crafted, there was stuff in Oceania or Lunas you couldn't get anywhere else; it was just the flavor of this town, its peculiar ability, its' strange slip-song call

that let it beat the hell out of destiny and rise to prominence in the world. It was said, by Seamus himself, that if there was a place no one could find, that place was in Oceania, and it could not only be found there- it was often venerated there. To Seamus, it was what made the town truly great.)

However, the woman who just ran past all these people hair long and golden blonde, screaming, shouting, rage, and trampling anyone and everyone in her way. The guards at the door, were completely stunned by the half-sane lucidity of this crazed madwoman, and were simply too slow, or maybe too weak, to stop her when she ran through the entry way and burst through the door. Harry, who was currently relaxing in his throne, looked up at her when she entered.

"Daphne, what ever is the matter?" Harry spoke, in a calming voice that slowed her. She came to a stop at the end the raised dais that his throne rested upon. She looked up her rage visible through her eyes as she spoke in a tone that slowed as she ground her teeth "That man escaped from me and my organization, again. He used another method to get to the White Shore. He has made me his enemy and I swear by my family magic and my own that I will kill him before I die, even if it is the last thing I do." Her magic reacted and flashed when she swore her oath.

"And," Harry said, "Who is this man, my dear friend?"

Daphne answer "Sirius Black, the man I will kill, your God Father." She felt almost nervous now that the rage had diminished.

Harry said "Ah, yes him. Don't be nervous, I hate him for abandoning me. He was on my to-kill-list anyways, he simply has moved from mine to yours. If you find it possible I ask that you do kill him. But for now I ask that you eliminate some of the ministry men and women in command that are actually competent. If you need a list you can ask Ginny or Blaise."

Daphne said "Very well, Harry" She left through the door that she very nearly broke upon her entrance.

Somewhere in the night, In what remains of the Forbidden forest.

Victoria, ran towards the Ministry's headquarters closest to Oceania. The lone monster in the woods (one of the final sterile males of the remnants of Aragog's horde- ironically, the Ministry army that had outposted itself near here had burned him to death a week ago, and without him, the remnants had literally eaten each other up) she met found itself torn apart by the sheer rush of magic coming from her mouth as she sang, her dancing almost as though to a tone only she could hear and only she could hear and all else tears themselves apart. As the magic from her music met the magic from the spider although small they merged, and then they turned into a massive blast of razor-sharp air that shattered the spider's body and reduced it to a pile of quivering mush.

Still smiling, still chuckling, still singing and dancing she ran on towards the Ministry. To destroy it for daring too come this close to her master, Samual. She was rather unprepared for what she found there.

But then again, considering even Seamus was a little surprised at what they found (and he was partially to blame for it), you can't really blame her.

One does not expect to see some of the greatest legendary monsters of all time ravaging the hell out of the biggest, most Ministry-loyal town in England, the one closest to the Ministry.

The place they called Home Hearth.

Home Port, Ministry town, located in England, 9:00 p.m., the next day.

The scene was a mess. The first Ministry man to arrive there- bizarrely, it was Seamus' old nemesis, Leehalt Siegfried, who had been commanding an army marching on Oceania but found himself a little pre-occupied before he got there- summed it up quite succinctly and aptly when he said this:

"I have seen many sights in my life. Not one of them made me cry. The deaths of my men in London and the death of my daughter in Storm Rigging have not affected me at all. But when I saw this... this made me cry."

Seamus was never one who thought not using what you had was a smart idea. He was a man who liked to whip out his guns and whip them out early; he never put much stock on saving something for a rainy day. Since he was part of something called the Tide, Seamus liked to joke that he was the rainy day, and so he decided to fight sunny ones. Bad days were rare for the Tide; good days were far better. Seamus began to play out his string of luck that winter, but for now, he still had a few tricks up his sleeve, and he was using them.

One of these involved the rebel armies in England. Still run by Alexander Ceras, that girl-crazed reporter turned half-assed nut case, who had been paid in a few nights with a young girl and who had given back so much more, the rebel army had grown to a few thousand strong, and though it was not yet enough to put up a fight, it was enough to be annoying as hell to an enemy. Seamus had planned on using them as a "last-resort" weapon, a sort of super surprise attack on the enemy's rear (Seamus planning to use the sheer shock and awe the rebel army- unsuspected to this point by the Ministry- would create by using them to keep Ministry attention away from key hotspot areas) when the war finally got going and they assaulted the Ministry directly, but now he was being forced to use them to keep Leehalt at bay and Oceania in Tide hands because they outnumbered them by nearly twenty times for the next two days and they were now making sure that all of their forces that could be given to the four town controlled in England more men to fight the biggest threats to the Tide for now. Control of the city was more than important; it was vital. In a kingdom as small as what Harry ruled, he needed all the firepower he could get. The Jester's Keep was, also, a big asset to the Tide- everybody loved the damn thing, and if they ever lost it, they'd lose both their best defensive structure, a hell of a lot of morale, 29 griffen eggs, a Spider Queen and it's mate and two red dragons that got along and mated regularly. Seamus doubted the people would just up and dump the Tide over it, but it was good to be prepared, just in case. You never knew when you were going to need an extra spoonful of morale to get over the next rough spot in your career. So Seamus stayed put and the Keep stayed put, and all was well.

Seamus had, however, noticed a tendency among his friends to get a little... well... "over-excited" about things, and so he was going to use that in his next conquest. Seamus sent out orders to the various rebel groups in England to gather weapons and form ranks. Once

that was done, they were to march on the nearest Wizarding town and beat on it. Alexander Ceras was to promise them "help" from an outside source (he claimed it to be Blancmange, a well-known, highly respected French force that dealt almost exclusively with justice and good- they were a major roadblock for the Tide to get over in future years). This way, the peasants (as Seamus called them in public with his friends; the Ebony Flame was well-used to this joke and rather enjoyed Seamus' off-normal sense of humor and ribbing) would be able to march with all confidence that they would have to do only a little fighting themselves. They did not know, of course, that Seamus hoped they'd all got killed. He assumed they would.

He was right. They did all get killed. But before they went, a small team of would-be crack operatives (who would have failed the Marauder entry test upon applying; the test was not spectacularly hard, but the Tide had standards, after all, and you couldn't fail to live up to them) entered the house of one Mrs. Tonks and they managed to screw things up spectacularly.

To say that Mrs. Tonks was a little surprised at the sheer volume of the attack would be an understatement. To say that she expected to get mauled by one of her own favorite pets would have been quite another.

After all, a pet that you recently named "Crabbels" just isn't supposed to kill you, is it?

Mrs. Tonks' House, in Home Hearth, Day of the Upsurge, 2:00 p.m., one half-hour into the rebel army attack.

The Ministry was the Might, in many ways; stupid, arrogant, foolish, and unable to see much beyond its own nose. The Might had some small skill at combating Black, as it was rather tough on its own (like a blind man with a bat; he didn't connect often, but when he did, it hurt like hell), and, of course, had no luck combating White, which was holier than they could dream and couldn't be offended by such weakness as they. Heaven's armor provides the best protection.

It is the trademark of weaker minds that the Ministry never did bother to wonder why the Shore was so powerful. They always blamed cold weather (funny, in retrospect; maybe it was the cold weather, the slippery, icy, cold weather that taught the Shore that

battling against the elements is nothing against battling yourself, and that you must do both to be strong).

The Ministry, therefore, did not consider the rag-tag army on its doorstep a problem. Consisting mostly of what one of the sergeants dismissively called "old drunks and raggedy old wives", the army was not considered a problem until the massive Samphiron that they had accidentally released stomped up, screamed, and fired three bolts off its back in their general direction. The three Damphiny Land Crabs (one of whom still had Mrs. Tonks' bloody dress hanging onto its hand) followed it shortly thereafter, stomping and screaming and ruining things in a kind of general manner. The rag-tag army looked at the monsters, screamed, and bolted, right into the waiting arms of... the ministry.

Confusedly, the army had tried to run off in a general direction but in no way was prepared to do so- instead, it ended up running back into itself and the ministry, ended up fighting with itself, and what a glorious battle it was. Seamus had equipped them with make-shift weaponry iron-shod clubs and that sort of thing and it resulted in an army which bore some of the strangest, deadliest, most... home-made weapons on the planet. One man, bearing the Wizarding equivalent of a molotov cocktail in his hand- a small mixture of volatile gases and liquid fire- was punched in the head by a much bigger man passing him by. He got angry, threw his volatile mixture somewhere off into the distance, and ended up catching several people on fire, damn near all of them ministry soldiers. These flaming corpses, unluckily for all involved, happened to be packed in a close-knit group of people, and no one could escape before they, too, were caught afire. One unlucky man was killed when the bottle of explosive he was holding- from the same factory as the one that started the blaze, ironically, and from the same maker (a vampire named Ockslide)- burst from the heat of the flaming, shambling, walking corpses near him, and that explosion caused even more people to catch afire. In short, the main portion of the army (which was still packed together in a tiny place in a small circle, making the confusion and fire even more rampant) was soon on fire. The Samphiron, land crabs, and most of the Ministry soldiers not directly involved in dealing with this crowd did not notice them.

To the Ministry's credit, they did not freak out when the massive Samphiron popped up. They treated it like any other DMB (destructive magical beast- if there was one thing the Ministry was

good at, it was coming up with strange and bizarre sounding acronyms that rather freaked out the average citizen) figure out its weakness, whether it can be killed, and, if it cannot be killed (for whatever political/magical reasons may interfere), how to contain it. Unfortunately, the Ministry man who should have been doing the research (a glasses-wearing, crazy old badger named Dum'non, regarded as an idiot by most people, who couldn't fight to save his life and who couldn't even do his job properly- as much as he looked like a mad scientist, he could never remember anything, and he always had to go back and check his books whenever his supposed "expertise" had to be called on whenever strange magical events occurred) that day was nowhere to be found.

He was lying outside, dead, a massive Samphiron energy bolt having gone through his head and out the back of it. There was nothing left of his face. It also didn't help that the book he'd been carrying had been lost when he dropped it in death.

Hilariously enough, he'd went outside to enjoy a bit of sun for the day before the Samphiron's attack had begun. This merely goes to prove that one can sometimes be killed in very ironic ways- in this case, the irony of the Creature of Light gunning you down while you were out to get a tan for the day. Some people have bad, bad lives and worst deaths.

To make a long story short, the Ministry had no idea how they were gonna kill this thing- it was huge, for one thing, and scaly, for another, making it a bad impact on morale as well as being a ridiculously tough beast- and the lights it were firing off were doing no good in and of themselves either. A curious quality of light is not that it breaks rune defenses not really (not any more than any other type of natural attack would damage them, excluding lightning and its obvious effects) but that it simply goes through them, and together with lightning, is one of the elements that does not obey rune law. Henceforth, men hiding behind bunker thickness and bunker stone were slammed with light, while men wearing light silk embroidered cloths (immune to the effects of light magic) were left unharmed. Some men were literally flash-fried as they sat near the wall; others were missed as the shots almost hit them but bounced off some reflective piece of armor. Men died and men screamed; and inside the bunker all was confusion.

Then the crabs came up, and most of the walls went down.

To say the ending was violent would be... well... insufficient.

It was horrible.

Jester's Keep, Oceania, Nov. 5, three hours after Daphne's entrance.
11 p.m.

He lay there with his wife, his monster lady. Blaise snuggled up to Harry, and he kissed her... it was hours after the sudden scene in the hall below, and Harry knew that Daphne would have hell to pay because not only her pride in never letting a target get away but because Seamus and Neville were really going to tear into her, but he'd fix that, it'd be all right. Then again Dora was likely to do worst then them. He would make sure that she was alright and had her revenge.

As he lay there, Blaise asked "So what had Daphne so angry?"

Harry answered "Sirius Black escaped from her. She is extremely angry that he escaped in one of the few methods that she didn't think was possible."

Blaise smiled and went to sleep and he did soon after.

Bountries on the Black Tide

Harry Potter (600 Thousand Galleon Dead from Ministry. 300 thousand Galleon Dead from Voldemort) "The Jester King" or "The Jester of Madness" King of the Ebony Flame

Seamus Finnigan (160 Thousand Galleons Alive/Dead, Ministry. 175 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 100-Thousand Dead, Voldemort) "The Black General" Part of the Ebony Flame

Ginny Weasley (150 Thousand Galleons Dead, Ministry. 175 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 100-Thousand Dead, Voldemort) "Lady of the Dead" or "The Black Lady" Part of the Ebony Flame

Blaise Zabini (150 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 120-Thousand Dead, Ministry. 195 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 100-Thousand Dead, Voldemort) "The Jester of Pain" Queen of the Ebony Flame

Neville Longbottom (150 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 120-Thousand Dead) "Master of Water" Part of the Ebony Flame

Padma Parvati (150 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 120-Thousand Dead) "Queen of Earth" Part of the Ebony Flame

Draco Malfoy (145 Thousand Galleons Alive/Dead, Ministry. 150 Thousand Galleons Alive/100-Thousand Dead, Voldemort.) "King of Beasts" Part of the Ebony Flame

Luna Lovegood (145 Thousand Galleons Alive/Dead) "Lady of Destruction" Part of the Ebony Flame

Terry Boot (145 Thousand Galleons Alive/Dead, Ministry. 175 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 100-Thousand Dead, Voldemort) "Lord of Hellfire" Part of the Ebony Flame

Samual (145 Thousand Galleons Dead) "Lord of Misfits" Part of the Ebony Flame

Cho Chang (145 Thousand Galleons Alive/Dead) "Lady of Monstrosity" Part of the Ebony Flame

Fleur Delacour (140 Thousand Galleons Alive/ 120-Thousand Dead) "The Metal Winged Lady"

Wedge (130 Thousand Alive/ 110 Thousand dead) apprenticed under Terry Boot. NKN

Richard Spithe (130 Thousand Alive/ 110 Thousand dead) "Secondary General"

Alex Vicks (130 Thousand Alive/ 110 Thousand dead) "Secondary General"

Victoria Heavenwalker (140 thousand dead) "the Heart Striker"

Current bounties on the White Shore

Hermione Granger (200 Thousand Galleons Dead) "the Snow Lady"

Ron Weasley (175 Thousand Galleons Dead) "Old Grim"

Walter Andrews (160 Thousand Galleons Dead) "Beast master"

Kaleb Isaacs (150 Thousand Alive/Dead) "Robin Hood"

Jimmy Peakes (150 Thousand Alive/Dead) "Serpent Slayer"

Current organizations in Black Tide.

Marauders are the basic soldier and terror squad. Their leader is Seamus who only takes orders from Harry or Blaise depending on the situation. His second in command is Vick and Spithe.

Purgers are those with Skull-masters. Their leader is Terry Boot who helps make the Skull-masters and is part of the Enchanters Guild. Terry follows Harry and then Seamus' orders.

Necromancers are those that raised the dead. It was controlled by Ginny. She took orders only from Harry and requests from Seamus.

Elementalist is those that control the elements. Some Purgers are part of the Fire Elementalists but instead of staffs they use their Skull-masters as ways to cast spells. All of the Eclipse is in some part of it. Some Krakens are part of it but not many. Neville is the commander of the Elementalist. He takes orders from Harry and sometimes Seamus. He also learned military strategy, from muggles, so to better command them in battle.

Enchanters are those that make the weapons. Some battle with other groups but most don't. Leader is Cho Chang. They follow Harry's orders.

The Eclipse is the demolition experts. Their leader is Luna who follows Harry's orders then Seamus'. She is also part of the more destructive side of the Enchanters Guild. practice

The Kraken is the beast tamers organization. Their leader is Draco who follows Harry's orders then Seamus'.

The Sword fish are the assassins. Their leader is Blaise then Daphne. Both of who only take orders from Harry.

The Great White is the interrogation, slavery, and torture organization and is composed mainly of fear-casters. Their leader is Blaise and then Tracey. Both only take orders from Harry.

Chimera is living experiments that are used in battle. Whipstitch is the official leader but is commanded by Cho Chang so she is in command of this unit. She takes orders from Harry and then Seamus.

Barbarians are those that use their rage to power their magic. They use their magic to surpass the human limit and some even get greatly angered and more powerful by pain. They are the opposite of the Monks who seek inner peace. They are lead by, formerly Nymphadora Tonks, now Dora Tonks and Fleur Delacour. They take orders from Harry and Seamus.

Misfits are creatures that have joined Harry, to find haven and take vengeance on the wizarding world that suppressed them. They ranged from werewolves, to vampires, to giants, to veela, to just about every other intelligent creature. Their leader is called Samuel and is a vampire. They take orders from Seamus and Harry.

Current White Shore organization

Crabs (paladins) are those that serve the light. They are stubborn and unmoving. Their leader is Ron. He takes orders from Hermione

Animals (beast tamers) they are those that bond with Beasts, and are angry at the Kraken for enslaving the beast of nature. They have bonds with the beast of nature so far that their own bodies change to look like them. They are lead by Walter Andrews who is supported by Charlie Weasley who is a new member. He takes orders from Hermione and Ron.

Plants (druids) they are those that control nature itself. They are angry at Harry for destroying the Forbidden forest. They are lead by Patil Parvati. She takes orders from Ron and Hermione.

Sands (warriors) are the basic soldiers. They have the greatest amount among them as well as some of their best soldiers. They are lead by Kaleb Isaacs. He takes orders from Ron and Hermione.

Fire (clerics) they are the healers and help improve battling conditions. They are lead by Hermione who in turn leads everyone in the White Shore.

Calm (monks) are those that have used their magic to give their bodies supernatural limits. They are the more melee fighter and work with the Warriors often. They seek an inner peace. Their leader is George. He takes orders from Hermione and Ron.

Enchanters are those that make the weapons of the White shore. They are powerful and involved with all of the groups. They are lead by Percy Weasley. They take orders from Hermione.

Trees (rangers) they are those that are like the druids in that they live in nature. They are some of the more survivalist of the White Shore. They are lead by Jimmy Peakes. He is descended from Glanmore Peakes who was slayer a powerful Great sea serpent as he himself has. He takes orders from Hermione and Ron

Silver out.

Chp21